ROB ROY

BY THE

THOR OF "WAVERLEY," "GUY MANNERING," AND

"THE ANTIQUARY."

For why? Because the good old rule
Sufficeth them; the simple plan,
That they should take, who have the power,
And they should keep who can.

Rob Roy's Grave.—WORDSWORTH.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

THIRD EDITION.

EDINBURGH:

Printed by James Ballantyne and Co.

FOR ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE AND CO. EDINBURGH; AND

LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN,

LONDON.

1818.

ADVERTISEMENT.

When the Editor of the following volumes published, about two years since, the work called "The Antiquary," he announced that he was, for the last time, intruding upon the public in his present capacity. He might shelter himself under the plea, that every anonymous writer is, like the celebrated Junius, only a phantom, and that therefore, although an apparition of a more benign, as well as much meaner description, he cannot be bound to plead to a charge of inconsistency. A better apology may be found in the imitating the confession of honest Benedict, that when he

said he would die a bachelor. He did not think he should live to be married. The best of all would be, if, as has eminently happened in the case of some distinguished contemporaries, the merit of the work should, in the reader's estimation, form an excuse for the author's breach of promise. Without presuming to hope that this may prove the case, it is only further necessary to mention, that my resolution, like that of Benedict, fell a sacrifice to temptation at least, if not to stratagem.

It is now about six months since the Author, through the medium of his respectable Publishers, received a parcel of Papers, containing the Outlines of this narrative, with a permission, or rather with a request, couched in highly flattering terms, that they might be given to the Public, with such al-

terations as should be found suitable. These were of course so numerous, that, besides the suppression of names, and of incidents approaching too much to reality, the work may in a great measure be said to be new written. Several anachronisms have probably crept in during the course of these changes; and the mottoes for the Chapters have been selected without any reference to the supposed date of the incidents. For these, of course, the Editor is responsible. Some others occurred in the original materials, but they are of little consequence. In point of minute accuracy, it may be stated, that the bridge over the Forth, or rather the Avondhu, (or Black River,) near the hamlet of Aberfoil, had not an existence thirty years ago. It does not, however, become the Editor to be the first to point out these

errors; and he takes this public opportunity to thank the unknown and nameless correspondent, to whom the reader will owe the principal share of any amusement which he may derive from the following pages.

ROB ROY.

VOL. I.



ROB ROY.



CHAPTER I.

How have I sinn'd, that this affliction
Should light so heavy on me? I have no more sons,
And this no more mine own.—My grand curse
Hang o'er his head that thus transformed thee!—Travel?
I'll send my horse to travel next.

MONSIEUR THOMAS.

You have requested me, my dear friend, to bestow some of that leisure with which Providence has blessed the decline of my life, in registering the hazards and difficulties which attended its commencement. The recollection of those adventures, as you are pleased to term them, has indeed left upon my mind a chequered and varied

feeling of pleasure and of pain, mingled, I trust, with no slight gratitude and veneration to the Disposer of human events, who guided my early course through much risk and labour, that the ease with which he has blessed my prolonged life, might seem softer from remembrance and contrast. Neither is it possible for me to doubt, what you have often affirmed, that the incidents which befel me among a people singularly primitive in their government and manners, have something interesting and attractive for those who love to hear an old man's stories of a past age.

Still, however, you must remember, that the tale told by one friend, and listened to by another, loses half its charms when committed to paper; and that the narratives to which you have listened with interest, as told by the voice of him to whom they occurred, will appear less deserving of attention when perused in the seclusion of your study. But your greener age and robust constitution promise longer life than will,

in all human probability, be the lot of your friend. Throw, then, these sheets into some secret drawer of your escrutoire till we are separated from each other's society by an event which may happen at any moment, and which must happen within the course of a few,—a very few years. When we are parted in this world, to meet, I hope, in a better, you will, I am well aware, cherish more than it deserves the memory of your departed friend, and will find in every detail which I am now to commit to paper, matter for melancholy, but not unpleasing reflection. Others bequeath to the confidents of their bosom portraits of their external features—I put into your hands a faithful transcript of my thoughts and feelings, of my virtues and of my failings; with the assured hope, that the follies and headstrong impetuosity of my youth will meet the same kind construction and forgiveness which has so often attended the faults of my matured age.

One advantage, among the many, of ad-

dressing my Memoirs, if I may give these sheets a name so imposing, to a dear and intimate friend, is, that I might spare some of the details, in this case unnecessary, with which I must needs have detained a stranger from what I have to say of greater interest. Why should I bestow all my tediousness upon you, because I have you in my power, and have ink, paper, and time before me? At the same time, I dare not promise that I may not abuse the opportunity so temptingly offered me, to treat of myself and my own concerns, even though I speak of circumstances as well known to you as to myself. The seductive love of detail, when we ourselves are the heroes of the events which we tell, often disregards the attention due to the time and patience of the audience, and the best and wisest have yielded to its fascination. I need only remind you of the singular instance evinced by the form of that rare and original edition of Sully's Memoirs, which you (with the fond vanity of a book-collector), insist upon

preferring to that which is reduced to the useful and ordinary form of Memoirs, but which I think curious, solely as illustrating how far so great a man as the author was accessible to the foible of self-importance. If I recollect rightly, that venerable peer and great statesman had appointed no fewer than four gentlemen of his household to draw up the events of his life, under the title of Memorials of the Sage and Royal Affairs of State, Domestic, Political, and Military, transacted by Henry IV., and so forth. These sage recorders, having made their compilation, reduced the Memoirs containing all the remarkable events of their master's life into a narrative, addressed to himself in *propria persona.* And thus, instead of telling his own story, in the third person, like Julius Cæsar, or in the first person, like most who, in the hall, or the study, undertake to be the heroes of their own tale, Sully enjoyed the refined, though whimsical pleasure, of having the events of his life told over to him by his se-

cretaries, being himself the auditor, as he was also the hero, and probably the author, of the whole book. It must have been a great sight to have seen the ex-minister, as bolt upright as a starched ruff and laced cassock could make him, seated in state beneath his canopy, and listening to the recitation of his compilers, while, standing bare in his presence, they informed him gravely, "Thus said the duke—so did the duke infer—such were your grace's sentiments upon this important point—such were your secret counsels to the king upon that other emergency,"—circumstances of which all must have been much better known to their hearer than to themselves, and most could only be derived from his own special communication.

My situation is not quite so ludicrous as that of the great Sully; and yet there would be something whimsical in Frank Osbaldistone giving Will Tresham a formal account of his birth, education, and connections in the world. I will, therefore, wrestle with the

tempting spirit of P. P., clerk of our parish, as I best may, and endeavour to tell you nothing that is familiar to you already. Some things, however, I must recal to your memory, because, though formerly well known to you, they may have been forgotten, through lapse of time, and they afford the ground-work of my destiny.

You must remember my father well, for as your own was a member of the mercantile house, you knew him from infancy. Yet you hardly saw him in his best days, before age and infirmity had quenched his ardent spirit of enterprize and speculation. He would have been a poorer man indeed, but perhaps as happy, had he devoted to the extension of science those active energies, and acute powers of observation, for which commercial pursuits found occupation. Yet, in the fluctuations of mercantile speculation, there is something captivating to the adventurer, even independent of the hope of gain. He who embarks on that fickle sea, requires to possess the skill of the

pilot and the fortitude of the navigator, and after all may be wrecked and lost, unless the gales of fortune breathe in his favour. This mixture of necessary attention and inevitable hazard,—the frequent and awful uncertainty whether prudence shall overcome fortune, or fortune baffle the schemes of prudence, affords full occupation for the powers, as well as for the feelings of the mind, and trade has all the fascination of gambling without its moral guilt.

Early in the 18th century, when I (Heaven help me) was a youth of some 20 years old, I was summoned suddenly from Bourdeaux to attend my father on business of importance. I shall never forget our first interview. You recollect the brief, abrupt, and somewhat stern mode in which he was wont to communicate his pleasure to those around him. Methinks I see him even now in my mind's eye ;—the firm and upright figure,—the step, quick and determined,—the eye, which shot so keen and so penetrating a glance,—the features, on which care had al-

ready planted wrinkles,—and hear his language, in which he never wasted word in vain, expressed in a voice which had sometimes an occasional harshness, far from the intention of the speaker.

When I dismounted from my post-horse, I hastened to my father's apartment. He was traversing it with an air of composed and steady deliberation, which even my arrival, although an only son unseen for four years, was unable to discompose. I threw myself into his arms. He was a kind, though not a fond father, and the tear twinkled in his dark eye, but it was only for a moment.

"Dubourg writes to me that he is satisfied with you, Frank."

"I am happy, sir"——

"But I have less reason to be so," he added, sitting down at his bureau.

"I am sorry, sir"——

"Sorry and happy, Frank, are words that, on most occasions, signify little or nothing—Here is your last letter."

He took it out from a number of others

tied up in a parcel of red tape, and curiously labelled and filed. There lay my poor epistle, written on the subject the nearest to my heart at the time, and couched in words which I had thought would work compassion, if not conviction,—there, I say, it lay, squeezed up among the letters on miscellaneous business in which my father's daily affairs had engaged him. I cannot help smiling internally when I recollect the mixture of hurt vanity, and wounded feeling, with which I regarded my remonstrance, to the penning of which there had gone, I promise you, some trouble, as I beheld it extracted from amongst letters of advice, of credit, and all the common-place lumber, as I then thought them, of a merchant's correspondence. Surely, thought I, a letter of such importance (I dared not even say to myself so well written,) deserved a separate place, as well as more anxious consideration, than those on the ordinary business of the counting-house.

But my father did not observe my dissa-

tisfaction, and would not have minded it if he had. He proceeded, with the letter in his hand. "This, Frank, is your's of the 21st ultimo, in which you advise me, (reading from my letter) that 'in the most important business of forming a plan, and adopting a profession for life, you trust my paternal goodness will hold you entitled to at least a negative voice; that you have insuperable'—ay, insuperable is the word—I wish, by the way, you would write a more distinct current hand—draw a score through the tops of your t's, and open the loops of your l's—'insuperable objections to the arrangements which I have proposed to you.' There is much more to the same effect, occupying four good pages of paper, which a little attention to perspicuity and distinctness of expression might have comprised within as many lines. For, after all, Frank, it amounts but to this, that you will not do as I would have you."

"That I cannot, sir, in the present instance; not that I will not."

"Words avail very little with me, young man," said my father, whose inflexibility always possessed the air of the most perfect calmness and self-possession. "*Can not* may be a more civil phrase than *will not*, but the expressions are synonymous where there is no moral impossibility. But I am not a friend to doing business hastily; we will talk this matter over after dinner.—Owen!"

Owen appeared, not with the silver locks which you were used to venerate, for he was then little more than fifty; but he had the same, or an exactly similar suit of light brown clothes,—the same pearl-grey silk stockings,—the same stock, with its silver buckles,—the same plaited cambric ruffles, drawn down over his knuckles in the parlour, but in the counting-house carefully folded back under the sleeves, that they might remain unstained by the ink which he daily consumed;—in a word, the same grave, formal, yet benevolent cast of features, which continued to his death to dis-

tinguish the head clerk of the great house of Osbaldistone and Tresham.

"Owen," said my father, as the kind old man shook me affectionately by the hand, "you must dine with us to-day, and hear the news Frank has brought us from our friends at Bourdeaux."

Owen made one of his stiff bows of respectful gratitude; for in those days, when the distance between superiors and inferiors was inforced in a manner to which the present times are strangers, such an invitation was a favour of some little consequence.

I shall long remember that dinner party. Deeply affected by feelings of anxiety, not unmingled with displeasure, I was unable to take that active share in the conversation which my father seemed to expect from me; and I too frequently gave unsatisfactory answers to the questions with which he assailed me. Owen, hovering betwixt his respect for his patron, and his love for the youth he had dandled on his knee in childhood, like the timorous, yet anxious ally of

an invaded nation, endeavoured at every blunder I made to explain my no-meaning, and to cover my retreat, manœuvres which added to my father's pettish displeasure, and brought a share of it upon himself, instead of protecting me. I had not, while residing in the house of Dubourg, absolutely conducted myself like

> A clerk condemn'd his father's soul to cross,
> Who penn'd a stanza when he should engross;—

but, to say truth, I had frequented the counting-house no more than I had thought absolutely necessary to secure the good report of the Frenchman, long a correspondent of our firm, to whom my father had trusted for initiating me into the secrets of commerce. In fact, my principal attention had been dedicated to literature and exercises. My father did not altogether discourage such acquirements, whether mental or personal. He had too much good sense not to perceive, that they sate grace-

fully upon every man, and he was sensible that they relieved and dignified the character to which he wished me to aspire. But his chief ambition was, that I should succeed not merely to his fortune, but to the views and plans by which he imagined he could extend and perpetuate the wealthy inheritance which he designed for me.

Love of his profession was the motive which he chose should be most ostensible, when he urged me to tread the same path; but he had others with which I only became acquainted at a later period. Impetuous in his schemes, as well as skilful and daring, each new adventure, when successful, became at once the incentive, and furnished the means, for farther speculation. It seemed to be necessary to him, as to an ambitious conqueror, to push on from achievement to achievement, without stopping to secure, far less to enjoy, the acquisitions which he made. Accustomed to see his whole fortune trembling in the scales of chance, and dexterous at adopting expe-

dients for casting the balance in his favour, his health and spirits and activity seemed ever to increase with the animating hazards on which he staked his wealth ; and he resembled a sailor, accustomed to brave the billows and the foe, whose confidence rises on the eve ot tempest or of battle. He was not, however, insensible to the changes which increasing age or supervening malady might make in his own constitution ; and was anxious in good time to secure in me an assistant, who might take the helm when his hand grew weary, and keep the vessel's way, according to his counsel and instruction. Paternal affection, as well as the furtherance of his own plans, determined him to the same conclusion. Your father, though his fortune was vested in the house, was only a sleeping partner, as the commercial phrase goes ; and Owen, whose probity and skill in the details of arithmetic rendered his services invaluable as a head clerk, was not possessed either of information or talents sufficient to conduct the mys-

teries of the principal management. If my father was suddenly summoned from life, what would become of the world of schemes which he had formed, unless his son were moulded into a commercial Hercules, fit to sustain the weight when relinquished by the falling Atlas? and what would become of that son himself, if, a stranger to business of this description, he found himself at once involved in the labyrinth of mercantile concerns, without the clue of knowledge necessary for its extraction? For all these reasons, avowed and secret, my father was determined I should embrace his profession; and when he was determined, the resolution of no man was more immoveable. I, however, was also a party to be consulted, and, with something of his own pertinacity, I had formed a determination precisely contrary.

It may, I hope, be some palliative for the resistance, which, on this occasion, I offered to my father's wishes, that I did not fully understand upon what they were founded,

or how deeply his happiness was involved in them. Imagining myself certain of a large succession in future, and ample maintenance in the meanwhile, it never occurred to me that it might be necessary, in order to secure these blessings, to submit to labour and limitations unpleasant to my taste and temper. I only saw in my father's proposal for my engaging in business, a desire that I should add to those heaps of wealth which he had himself acquired; and imagining myself the best judge of the path to my own happiness, I did not conceive that I should increase it by augmenting a fortune which I believed was already sufficient, and more than sufficient, for every use, comfort, and elegant enjoyment.

Accordingly, I am compelled to repeat, that my time at Bourdeaux had not been spent as my father had proposed to himself. What he considered as the chief end of my residence in that city, I had postponed to every other, and would (had I dared) have neglected altogether. Dubourg, a favoured

and benefitted correspondent of our mercantile house, was too much of a shrewd politician to make such reports to the head of the firm concerning his only child, as would excite the displeasure of both ; and he might also, as you will presently hear, have views of selfish advantage in suffering me to neglect the purposes for which I was placed under his charge. My conduct was regulated by the bounds of decency and good order, and thus far he had no evil report to make, supposing him so disposed : but, perhaps, the crafty Frenchman would have been equally complaisant, had I been in the habit of indulging worse feelings than those of indolence and aversion to mercantile business. As it was, while I gave a decent portion of my time to the commercial studies he recommended, he was by no means envious of the hours which I dedicated to other and more classical attainments, nor did he ever find fault with me for dwelling upon Corneille and Boileau, in preference to Postlethwayte, (supposing

his folio to have then existed, and Monsieur Dubourg able to have pronounced his name), or Savary, or any other writer on commercial economy. He had picked up somewhere a convenient expression, with which he rounded off every letter to his correspondent. "I was all," he said, "that a father could wish."

My father never quarrelled with a phrase, however frequently repeated, provided it seemed to him distinct and expressive; and Addison himself could not have found expressions so satisfactory to him as, "Your's received, and duly honoured the bills inclosed, as per margin."

Knowing, therefore, very well what he desired me to be, Mr Osbaldistone made no doubt, from the frequent repetition of Dubourg's favourite phrase, that I was the very thing he wished to see me; when, in an evil hour, he received my letter, containing my eloquent and detailed apology for declining a place in the firm, and a desk and stool in the corner of the dark counting-house in

Crane Alley, surmounting in height those of Owen, and the other clerks, and only inferior to the tripod of my father himself. All was wrong from that moment. Dubourg's reports became as suspicious as if his bills had been noted for dishonour. I was summoned home in all haste, and received in the manner I have already communicated to you.

CHAPTER II.

I begin shrewdly to suspect the young man of a terrible taint
—Poetry; with which idle disease if he be infected, there's
no hope of him in a state course. *Actum est* of him for
a commonwealth's man, if he go to't in rhyme once.

BEN JONSON's *Bartholomew Fair.*

MY father had, generally speaking, his temper under complete self-command, and his anger rarely indicated itself by words, except in a sort of dry testy manner to those who had displeased him. He never used threats or expressions of loud resentment. All was arranged with him upon system, and it was his practice to "do the needful" upon every occasion, without wasting words about it. It was, therefore, with a bitter smile that he listened to my imperfect answers concerning the state of commerce in

France, and unmercifully permitted me to involve myself deeper and deeper in the mysteries of agio, tariffs, tare and tret; nor can I charge my memory with his having looked positively angry, until he found me unable to explain the exact effect which the depreciation of the louis d'or had produced upon the negociation of bills of exchange. "The most remarkable national occurrence in my time," said my father, (who nevertheless had seen the revolution) "and he knows no more of it than a post on the quay!"

"Mr Francis," suggested Owen, in his timid and conciliatory manner, "cannot have forgotten, that by an *arret* of the King of France, dated 1st May, 1700, it was provided that the *porteur*, within ten days after due, must make demand——"

"Mr Francis," said my father, interrupting him, "will, I dare say, recollect for the moment any thing you are so kind as hint to him.—But, body o' me! how Dubourg could permit him!—Hark ye, Owen,

what sort of a youth is Clement Dubourg, his nephew there, in the office, the black-haired lad?"

"One of the cleverest clerks, sir, in the house; a prodigious young man for his time," answered Owen; for the gaiety and civility of the young Frenchman had won his heart.

"Aye, aye, I suppose *he* knows something of the nature of exchange. Dubourg was determined I should have one youngster at least about my hand who understood business; but I see his drift, and he shall find that I do so when he looks at the balance-sheet. Owen, let Clement's salary be paid up to next quarter-day, and let him ship himself back to Bourdeaux in his father's ship, which is clearing out yonder."

"Dismiss Clement Dubourg, sir?" said Owen, with a faultering voice.

"Yes, sir, dismiss him instantly; it is enough to have a stupid Englishman in the counting-house to make blunders, without keeping a sharp Frenchman there to profit by them."

I had lived long enough in the territories of the *Grand Monarque* to contract a hearty aversion to arbitrary exertion of authority, even if it had not been instilled into me with my earliest breeding; and I could not refrain from interposing, to prevent an innocent and meritorious young man from paying the penalty of having acquired that proficiency which my father had desired for me.

"I beg pardon, sir," when Mr Osbaldiston had done speaking, "but I think it but just, that, if I have been negligent of my studies, I should pay the forfeit myself. I have no reason to charge Monsieur Dubourg with having neglected to give me opportunity of improvement, however little I may have profited by them; and, with respect to Monsieur Clement Dubourg"—

"With respect to him, and to you, I shall take the measures which I see needful," replied my father; "but it is fair in you, Frank, to take your own blame on your own shoulders—very fair, that cannot be denied.

I cannot acquit old Dubourg," he said, looking to Owen, "for having merely afforded Frank the means of useful knowledge, without either seeing that he took advantage of them, or reporting to me if he did not. You see, Owen, he has natural notions of equity becoming a British merchant."

"Mr Francis," said the head clerk, with his usual formal inclination of the head, and a slight elevation of his right hand, which he had acquired by a habit of sticking his pen behind his ear before he spoke—"Mr Francis seems to understand the fundamental principle of all moral accounting, the great ethic rule of three. Let A do to B, as he would have B do to him; the product will give the rule of conduct required."

My father smiled at this reduction of the golden rule to arithmetical form, but instantly proceeded.

"All this signifies nothing, Frank; you have been throwing away your time like a boy, and in future you must learn to live

like a man. I shall put you under Owen's care for a few months, to recover the lost ground."

I was about to reply, but Owen looked at me with such a supplicatory and warning gesture, that I was involuntarily silent.

" We will then," continued my father, " resume the subject of mine, of the 1st ultimo, to which you sent me an answer which was unadvised and unsatisfactory. So now, fill your glass, and push the bottle to Owen."

Want of courage—of audacity, if you will,—was never my failing. I answered firmly, " I was sorry that my letter was unsatisfactory, unadvised it was not; for I had given the proposal his goodness had made me my instant and anxious attention, and it was with no small pain that I found myself obliged to decline it."

My father bent his keen eye for a moment on me, and instantly withdrew it. As he made no answer, I thought myself obliged to proceed, though with some hesitation,

and he only interrupted me by monosyllables.

"It is impossible, sir, for me to have higher respect for any character than I have for the commercial, even were it not yours."

"Indeed!"

"It connects nation with nation, relieves the wants, and contributes to the wealth of all; and is to the general commonwealth of the civilized world what the daily intercourse of ordinary life is to private society, or rather, what air and food are to our bodies."

"Well, sir?"

"And yet, sir, I find myself compelled to persist in declining to adopt a character which I am so ill qualified to support."

"I will take care that you acquire the qualifications necessary. You are no longer the guest and pupil of Dubourg."

"But, my dear sir, it is no defect of teaching which I plead, but my own inability to profit by instruction."

"Nonsense; have you kept your journal in the terms I desired?"

"Yes, sir."

"Be pleased to bring it here."

The volume thus required was a sort of common-place book, kept by my father's recommendation, in which I had been directed to enter notes of the miscellaneous information which I had acquired in the course of my studies. Foreseeing that he would demand inspection of this record, I had been attentive to transcribe such particulars of information as he would most likely be pleased with, but too often the pen had discharged the task without much correspondence with the head. And it had also happened, that, the book being the receptacle nearest to my hand, I had occasionally jotted down memoranda which had little regard to traffic. I now put it into my father's hand, devoutly hoping he might light on nothing that would increase his displeasure against me. Owen's face, which had looked something blank when the ques-

tion was put, cleared up at my ready an-swer, and wore a smile of hope, when I brought from my apartment, and placed be-fore my father, a commercial-looking vo-lume, rather broader than it was long, ha-ving brazen clasps and a binding of rough calf. This looked business-like, and was encouraging to my benevolent well-wisher. But he actually smiled with pleasure as he heard my father run over some part of the contents, muttering his critical remarks as he went on.

" *Brandies—Barils and barricants, also tonneaux.—At Nantz* 29—*Velles to the ba-rique at Cognac and Rochelle* 27—*At Bour-deaux* 32—Very right, Frank—*Duties on tonnage and custom-house, see Saxby's Tables* —That's not well; you should have tran-scribed the passage; it fixes the thing on the memory—*Reports outward and inward —Corn debentures—Over-sea Cockets—Linens—Isingham—Gentish—Stock-fish—Titling—Cropling—Lub-fish.* You should have noted that they are all, nevertheless,

to be entered as titlings.—How many inches long is a titling?"

Owen, seeing me at fault, hazarded a whisper, of which I fortunately caught the import:

"Eighteen inches, sir"—

"And a lub-fish is twenty-four—very right. It is important to remember this, on account of the Portugueze trade.—But what have we here?—*Bourdeaux founded in the year—Castle of the Trompette—Palace of Gallienus*—Well, well, that's very right too.—This is a kind of waste-book, Owen, in which all the transactions of the day, emptions, orders, payments, receipts, acceptances, draughts, commissions, and advices, are entered miscellaneously."

"That they may be regularly transferred to the day-book and ledger," answered Owen; "I am glad Mr Francis is so methodical."

I perceived myself getting so fast into favour, that I began to fear the consequence would be my father's more obstinate perse-

verance in his resolution that I must be-come a merchant, and, as I was determined on the contrary, I began to wish I had not, to use my friend Mr Owen's phrase, been so methodical. But I had no reason for apprehension on that score; for a blotted piece of paper dropped out of the book, and, being taken up by my father, he interrupted a hint from Owen, on the propriety of securing loose memoranda with a little paste, by exclaiming, "To the memory of Edward the Black Prince—What's all this?—verses!—By Heaven, Frank, you are a greater blockhead than I supposed you!"

My father, you must recollect, as a man of business, looked upon the labour of poets with contempt; and as a religious man, and of the dissenting persuasion, he considered such pursuits as equally trivial and profane. Before you condemn him, you must recal to remembrance how too many of the poets in the end of the seventeenth century had led their lives and employed

their talents. The sect also to which my father belonged, felt, or perhaps affected, a puritanical aversion to the lighter exertions of literature. So that many causes contributed to augment the unpleasant surprise occasioned by the ill-timed discovery of this unfortunate copy of verses. As for poor Owen, could the bob-wig which he then wore have uncurled itself, and stood on end with horror, I am convinced the morning's labour of the friseur would have been undone, merely by the excess of his astonishment at this enormity. An inroad on the strong-box, or an erasure in the ledger, or a mis-summation in a fitted account, could hardly have surprised him more disagreeably. My father read the lines sometimes with an affectation of not being able to understand the sense,—sometimes in a mouthing tone of mock heroic,—always with an emphasis of the most bitter irony, most irritating to the nerves of the author.

"O for the voice of that wild horn,
On Fontarabian echoes borne,
The dying hero's call,

That told imperial Charlemagne,
How Paynim sons of swarthy Spain
Had wrought his champion's fall."

"*Fontarabian echoes!*" continued my father, interrupting himself; "the Fontarabian Fair would have been more to the purpose.—*Paynim?*—What's Paynim?—Could you not say Pagan as well, and write English, at least, if you must needs write nonsense.—

"Sad over earth and ocean sounding,
And England's distant cliffs astounding,
Such are the notes should say
How Britain's hope, and France's fear,
Victor of Cressy and Poitier,
In Bourdeaux dying lay."

"Poitiers, by the way, is always spelled with an *s*, and I know no reason why orthography should give place to rhyme.—

"Raise my faint head, my squires," he said,
"And let the casement be display'd,
That I may see once more

The splendour of the setting sun
Gleam on thy mirror'd wave, Garonne,
And Blaye's empurpled shore."

"*Garonne* and *sun* is a bad rhyme. Why, Frank, you do not even understand the beggarly trade you have chosen.

"Like me, he sinks to Glory's sleep,
His fall the dews of evening steep,
As if in sorrow shed.
So soft shall fall the trickling tear,
When England's maids and matrons hear
Of their Black Edward dead.

"And though my sun of glory set,
Nor France, nor England shall forget
The terror of my name;
And oft shall Britain's heroes rise,
New planets in these southern skies,
Through clouds of blood and flame."

"A cloud of flame is something new—Good-morrow, my masters all, and a merry Christmas to you!—Why, the bellman writes better lines." He then tossed the paper from him with an air of superlative

contempt, and concluded,—"Upon my credit, Frank, you are a greater blockhead than I took you for."

What could I say, my dear Tresham?—There I stood, swelling with indignant mortification, while my father regarded me with a calm but stern look of scorn and pity; and poor Owen, with uplifted hands and eyes, looked as striking a picture of horror as if he had just read his patron's name in the Gazette. At length I took courage to speak, endeavouring that my tone of voice should betray my feelings as little as possible.

"I am quite aware, sir, how ill qualified I am to play the conspicuous part in society you have destined for me; and, luckily, I am not ambitious of the wealth I might acquire. Mr Owen would be a much more effective assistant." I said this in some malice, for I considered Owen as having deserted my cause a little too soon.

"Owen?" said my father—"The boy is mad, actually insane. And, pray, sir, if I

may presume to enquire, having coolly turned me over to Mr Owen, (although I may expect more attention from any one than from my son) what may your own sage projects be?"

"I should wish, sir," I replied, summoning up my courage, "to travel for two or three years, should that consist with your pleasure; otherwise, although late, I would willingly spend the same time at Oxford or Cambridge."

"In the name of common sense! was the like ever heard?—to put yourself to school among pedants and jacobites, when you might be pushing your fortune in the world! Why not go to Westminster or Eaton at once, man, and take to Lilly's Grammar and Accidence, and to the birch too, if you like it?"

"Then, sir, if you think my plan of improvement too late, I would willingly return to the continent."

"You have spent too much time there to little purpose, Mr Francis."

" Then I would choose the army, sir, in preference to any other active line of life."

" Choose the d—l," answered my father, hastily, and then checking himself—" I profess you make me as great a fool as you are yourself.—Is he not enough to drive one mad, Owen ?" Poor Owen shook his head, and looked down. " Hark ye, Frank," continued my father, " I will cut all this matter very short—I was at your age when my father turned me out of doors, and settled my legal inheritance on my younger brother. I left Osbaldistone Hall on the back of a broken down hunter, with ten guineas in my purse. I have never crossed the threshold again, and I never will. I know not, and I care not, if my fox-hunting brother is alive, or has broken his neck ; but he has children, Frank, and one of them shall be my son if you cross me farther in this matter."

" You will do your pleasure," I answered, rather, I fear, with more sullen indiffe-

-ance than respect, "with what is your own."

"Yes, Frank, what I have *is* my own, if labour in getting, and care in augmenting, can make a right of property; and no drone shall feed on my honeycomb. Think on it well; what I have said is not without reflection, and what I resolve upon I will execute."

"Honoured sir—dear sir," exclaimed Owen, tears rushing into his eyes, "you are not wont to be in such hurry in transacting business of importance. Let Mr Francis run up the balance before you shut the account; he loves you, I am sure; and when he puts down his filial obedience to the *per contra*, I am sure his objections will disappear."

"Do you think I will ask him twice," said my father, sternly, "to be my friend, my assistant, and my confidant?—to be a partner of my cares and of my fortune? Owen, I thought you had known me better."

He looked at me as if he meant to add something more, but turned instantly away, and left the room abruptly. I was, I own, affected by this view of the case, which had not occurred to me, and my father would probably have had little reason to complain of me, had he commenced the discussion with this argument.

But it was too late. I had much of his own obduracy of resolution, and Heaven had decreed that my sin should be my punishment, though not to the extent which my transgression merited. Owen, when we were left alone, continued to look at me with eyes, which tears from time to time moistened, as to discover, before attempting the task of intercessor, upon what point my obstinacy was most assailable. At length he began, with broken and disconcerted accents,—" O l—d, Mr Francis!—Good Heavens, sir!—My stars, Mr Osbaldistone!—that I should ever have seen this day—and you so young a gentleman, sir—For the love of Heaven! look at both sides

the account—Think what you are going to lose—a noble fortune, sir—one of the finest houses in the city, even under the old firm of Tresham and Trent, and now Osbaldistone and Tresham—You might roll in gold, Mr Francis—And, my dear young Mr Frank, if there was any particular thing in the business of the house which you disliked, I would" (sinking his voice to a whisper) " put it in order for you termly, or weekly, or daily, if you will—Do, my dear Mr Francis, think of the honour due to your father, that your days may be long in the land."

" I am much obliged to you, Mr Owen," said I,—" very much obliged, indeed; but my father is best judge how to bestow his money. He talks of one of my cousins—let him dispose of his wealth as he pleases, I will never sell my liberty for gold."

" Gold, sir?—I wish you saw the balance sheet of profits at last term—It was in five figures—five figures to each partner's sum total, Mr Frank—And all this is

to go to a Papist, and a north-country booby, and a disaffected person besides—It will break my heart, Mr Francis, that have been toiling more like a dog than a man, and all for love of the firm.—Think how it will sound, Osbaldistone, Tresham, and Osbaldistone—or, perhaps, who knows," (again lowering his voice) " Osbaldistone, Osbaldistone, and Tresham, for our Mr Osbaldistone can buy them all out."

" But, Mr Owen, my cousin's name being also Osbaldistone, the name of the company will sound every bit as well in your ears."

" O, fie upon you, Mr Francis, when you know how well I love you—your cousin, indeed!—a Papist, no doubt, like his father, and a disaffected person to the Protestant succession — that's another item, doubtless."

" There are many very good men.Catholics, Mr Owen," rejoined I.

As Owen was about to answer, with un-

[illegible] animation, my father re-entered the [illegible]artment.

"You were right," he said, "Owen, and I was wrong; we will take more time to think over this matter.—Young man, you will prepare to give me an answer on this important subject this day month."

I bowed in silence, sufficiently glad of a reprieve, and trusting it might indicate some relaxation in my father's determination.

The time of probation past slowly, unmarked by any accident whatever. I went and came, and disposed of my time as I pleased, without question or criticism on the part of my father. Indeed, I rarely saw him, save at meal times, when he studiously avoided a discussion which you may well suppose I was in no hurry to press onward. Our conversation was of the news of the day, or of such general topics as strangers discourse upon to each other; nor could any one have guessed, from its tenor, that there remained undecided be-

twixt us a dispute of such importance. It haunted me, however, more than once, like a night mare. Was it possible he would keep his word, and disinherit his only son in favour of a nephew, whose very existence he was not perhaps quite eertain of? My grand-father's conduct, in similar circumstances, boded me no good, had I considered the matter rightly. But I had formed an erroneous idea of my father's character, from the importance which I recollected I maintained with him and his whole family before I went to France. I was not aware, that there are men who indulge their children at an early age, because it interests and amuses them, and who can yet be sufficiently severe when the same children cross their expectations at a more advanced period. On the contrary, I persuaded myself, that all I had to apprehend, was some temporary alienation of affection;—perhaps a rustication of a few weeks, which I thought would rather please me as otherwise, since it would give me an opportunity of setting about my

finished version of Orlando Furioso, a poem which I longed to render into English verse. I suffered this belief to get such absolute possession of my mind, that I had resumed my blotted papers, and was busy in meditation on the oft-recurring rhymes of the Spenserian stanza, when I heard a low and cautious tap at the door of my apartment. "Come in," I said, and Mr Owen entered. So regular were the motions and habits of this worthy man, that in all probability this was the first time he had ever been in the second story of his patron's house, however conversant with the first; and I am still at a loss to know in what manner he discovered my apartment.

"Mr Francis," he said, interrupting my expressions of surprise and pleasure at seeing him, "I do not know if I am doing well in what I am about to say—it is not right to speak of what passes in the compting-house out of doors—one should not tell, as they say, to the post in the warehouse, how many lines there are in the ledger. But

young Twineall has been absent from the house for a fortnight and more, until two days since."

"Very well, my dear sir, and how does that concern us?"

"Stay, Mr Francis—your father gave him a private commission; and I am sure he did not go down to Falmouth about the Pilchard affair; and the Exeter business with Blackwell and company has been settled; and the mining people in Cornwall, Trevanion, and Treguilliam, have paid all they are like to pay; and any other matter of business must have been put through my books; in short, it's my faithful belief that Twineall has been down in the north."

"Do you really suppose so?" said I, somewhat startled.

"He has spoken about nothing, sir, since he returned, but his new boots, and his Rippon spurs, and a cock-fight at York—it's as true as the multiplication-table. Do, Heaven bless you, my dear child, make up your

mind to please your father, and to be a man and a merchant at once."

I felt at that instant a strong inclination to submit, and to make Owen happy by requesting him to tell my father, that I resigned myself to his disposal. But pride—pride, the source of so much that is good and so much that is evil in our course of life, prevented me. My acquiescence stuck in my throat; and while I was coughing to get it up, my father's voice summoned Owen. He hastily left the room, and the opportunity was lost.

My father was methodical in every thing. At the very same time of the day, in the same apartment, and with the same tone and manner which he had employed an exact month before, he recapitulated the proposal he had made for taking me into partnership, and assigning me a department in the counting-house, and requested to have my final decision. I thought at the time there was something unkind in this; and I still think that my father's conduct was in-

judicious. A more conciliatory treatment would, in all probability, have gained his purpose. As it was, I stood fast, and, as respectfully as I could, declined the proposal he made to me. Perhaps,—for who can judge of their own heart,—I felt it unmanly to yield on the first summons, and expected farther solicitation, as, at least, a pretext for changing my mind. If so, I was disappointed; for my father turned coolly to Owen, and only said, "You see it is as I told you.—Well, Frank," (addressing me) "You are nearly of age, and as well qualified to judge of what will constitute your own happiness as you ever are like to be; therefore, I say no more. But as I am not bound to give in to your plans, any more than you are compelled to submit to mine, may I ask to know if you have formed any which depend on my assistance?"

I answered, not a little abashed, "that being bred to no profession, and having no funds of my own, it was obviously impossible for me to subsist without some allow-

ance from my father; that my wishes were very moderate; and that I hoped my aversion for the profession to which he had designed me, would not occasion his altogether withdrawing his paternal support and protection."

"That is to say, you wish to lean on my arm, and yet to walk your own way? That can hardly be, Frank;—however, I suppose you mean to obey my directions, so far as they do not cross your own humour?"

I was about to speak—"Silence, if you please," he continued. "Supposing this to be the case, you will instantly set out for the North of England, to pay your uncle a visit, and see the state of his family. I have chosen from among his sons (he has seven I believe) one whom I understand is most worthy to fill the place I intended for you in the counting-house. But some farther arrangements may be necessary, and for these your presence may be requisite. You shall have further instructions at Os-

baldistone Hall, where you will please to remain until you hear from me. Every thing will be ready for your departure to morrow morning."

With these words my father left the apartment.

"What does all this mean, Mr Owen?" said I to my sympathetic friend, whose countenance wore a cast of the deepest dejection.

"You have ruined yourself, Mr Frank, that's all; when your father talks in that quiet determined manner, there will be no more change in him than in a fitted account."

And so it proved; for the next morning, at five o'clock, I found myself on the road to York, mounted on a reasonably good horse, and with fifty guineas in my pocket; travelling, as it would seem, for the purpose of assisting in the adoption of a successor to myself in my father's house and favour, and, for aught I knew, eventually in his fortune also.

CHAPTER III.

> The slack sail shifts from side to side,
> The boat, untrimm'd, admits the tide,
> Borne down, adrift, at random tost,
> The oar breaks short, the rudder's lost.
>
> GAY'S *Fables*.

I HAVE tagged with rhyme and blank verse the subdivisions of this important narrative, in order to seduce your continued attention by powers of composition of stronger attraction than my own. The preceding lines refer to an unfortunate navigator, who daringly unloosed from its moorings a boat, which he was unable to manage, and thrust it off into the full tide of a navigable river. No school-boy, who, betwixt frolic and defiance, had executed a similar rash attempt, could feel himself,

when adrift in a strong current, in a situation more awkward than mine, when I found myself driving, without a compass, on the ocean of human life. There had been such unexpected ease in the manner in which my father slipt a knot, usually esteemed the strongest which binds society together, and suffered me to depart as a sort of outcast from his family, that it strangely lessened the confidence in my own personal accomplishments, which had hitherto sustained me. Prince Prettyman, now a prince, and now a fisher's son, had not a more awkward sense of his degradation. We are so apt, in our engrossing egotism, to consider all those accessories which are drawn around us by prosperity, as pertaining and belonging to our own persons, that the discovery of our unimportance, when left to our own proper resources, becomes inexpressibly mortifying. As the hum of London died away on my ear, the distant peal of her steeples more than once sounded to my ears the admonitory

"Turn again," erst heard by her future Lord Mayor; and when I looked back from Highgate on her dusky magnificence, I felt as if I were leaving behind me comfort, opulence, the charms of society, and all the pleasures of cultivated life.

But the die was cast. It was, indeed, by no means probable that a late and ungracious compliance with my father's wishes would have reinstated me in the situation which I had lost. On the contrary, firm and strong of purpose as he himself was, he might rather have been disgusted than conciliated by my tardy and compulsory acquiescence in his desire that I should enter into commerce. My constitutional obstinacy came also to my aid, and pride whispered how poor a figure I should make, when an airing of four miles from London had blown away resolutions formed in a month's serious deliberation. Hope, too, that never forsakes the young and hardy, lent her lustre to my future prospects. My father could not be serious in the sentence of fo

ris-familiation, which he had so unhesitatingly pronounced. It must be but a trial of my disposition, which, endured with patience and steadiness on my part, would raise me in his estimation, and lead to an amicable accommodation of the point in dispute between us. I even settled in my own mind how far I would concede to him, and upon what articles of our supposed treaty I would make a firm stand, and the result was, according to my computation, that I was to be reinstated in my full rights of filiation, paying the easy penalty of some ostensible compliances to atone for my past rebellion.

In the meanwhile, I was lord of my person, and experienced that feeling of independence which the youthful bosom receives with a thrilling mixture of pleasure and apprehension. My purse, though by no means amply replenished, was in a situation to supply all the wants and wishes of a traveller. I had been accustomed, while at Bourdeaux, to act as my own valet; my horse was fresh, young, and active, and the

buoyancy of my spirits soon surmounted the melancholy reflections with which my journey commenced.

I should have been glad if I had journeyed upon a line of road better calculated to afford reasonable objects of curiosity, or a more interesting country, to the traveller. But the north road was then, and perhaps still is, singularly deficient in these respects; nor do I believe you can travel so far through Britain in any other direction without meeting more of what is worthy to engage the attention. My mental ruminations, notwithstanding my assumed confidence, were not always of an unchequered nature. The Muse too,—the very coquette who had led me into this wilderness,—like others of her sex, deserted me in my utmost need; and I should have been reduced to rather an uncomfortable state of dulness, had it not been for the occasional conversation of strangers who chanced to pass the same way. But the characters whom I met with were of a uniform and

uninteresting description. Country parsons, jogging homewards after a visitation; farmers, or graziers, returning from a distant market; clerks of traders, travelling to collect what was due to their masters in provincial towns, with now and then an officer going down into the country upon the recruiting service, were, at this period, the persons by whom the turnpikes and tapsters were kept in exercise. Our speech, therefore, was of tithes and creeds, of beeves and grain, of commodities wet and dry, and the solvency of the retail dealers, occasionally varied by the description of a siege, or battle, in Flanders, which, perhaps, the narrator only gave me at second hand. Robbers, a fertile and alarming theme, filled up every vacancy; and the names of the Golden Farmer, the Flying Highwayman, Jack Needham, and other Beggar's Opera heroes, were familiar in our mouths as household words. At such tales, like children closing their circle round the fire when the ghost story draws to its cli-

max, the riders drew near to each other, looked before and behind them, examined the priming of their pistols, and vowed to stand by each other in case of danger; an engagement which, like other offensive and defensive alliances, sometimes glided out of remembrance when there was an appearance of actual peril.

Of all the fellows whom I ever saw haunted by terrors of this nature, one poor man, with whom I travelled a day and a half, afforded me most amusement. He had upon his pillion a very small, but apparently a very weighty portmanteau, about the safety of which he seemed particularly solicitous, never trusting it out of his own immediate care, and uniformly repressing the officious zeal of the waiters and ostlers, who offered their services to carry it into the house. With the same precaution he laboured to conceal, not only the purpose of his journey, and his ultimate place of destination, but even the direction of each day's route. Nothing embarrassed him more than to be

asked by any one, whether he was travelling upward or downward, or at what stage he intended to bait. His place of rest for the night he scrutinized with the most anxious care, alike avoiding solitude, and what he considered as bad neighbourhood; and at Grantham, I believe, he sate up all night to avoid sleeping in the next room to a thick-set squinting fellow, in a black wig, and a tarnished gold-laced waistcoat. With all these cares on his mind, my fellow traveller, to judge by his thewes and sinews, was a man who might have set danger at defiance with as much impunity as most men. He was strong, and well-built; and, judging from his gold-laced hat and cockade, seemed to have served in the army, or, at least, to belong to the military profession in one capacity or other. His conversation also, though always sufficiently vulgar, was that of a man of sense, when the terrible bugbears which haunted his imagination for a moment ceased to occupy his attention. But every accidental asso-

ciation recalled them. An open heath, a close plantation, were alike subjects of his apprehension; and the whistle of a shepherd lad was instantly converted into the signal of a depredator. Even the sight of a gibbet, if it assured him that one robber was safely disposed of by justice, never failed to remind him how many remained still unhanged.

I should have wearied of this fellow's company, had I not been still more tired of my own thoughts. Some of the marvellous stories, however, which he related, had in themselves a cast of interest, and another whimsical point of his peculiarities afforded me the occasional opportunity of amusing myself at his expence. Among his tales, several of the unfortunate travellers who fell among thieves, incurred that calamity from associating themselves on the road with a well-dressed and entertaining stranger, in whose company they trusted to find protection as well as amusement; who cheered their journey with tale and song, protected them against the evils of overcharges and false

reckonings, until at length, under pretext of shewing a nearer road over a desolate common, he seduced his unsuspicious victims from the public road into some dismal glen, where, suddenly blowing his whistle, he assembled his comrades from their lurking-place, and displayed himself in his true colours, the captain, namely, of the band of robbers to whom his unwary fellow-travellers had forfeited their purses, and perhaps their lives. Towards the conclusion of such a tale, and when my companion had wrought himself into a fever of apprehension by the progress of his own narrative, I observed that he usually eyed me with a glance of doubt and suspicion, as if the possibility occurred to him, that he might, at the very moment of speaking, be in company with a character as dangerous as that which his tale described. And ever and anon, when such suggestions pressed themselves on the mind of this ingenious self-tormentor, he drew off from my side to the opposite side of the high road, looked before, behind, and around him, examined his

arms, and seemed to prepare himself for flight or defence, as circumstances might require.

The suspicion implied on such occasions seemed to be only momentary, and appeared to me too ludicrous to be offensive. There was, in fact, no particular reflection on my dress or address, although I was thus mistaken for a robber. A man in these days might have all the external appearance of a gentleman, and yet turn out a highwayman. For the division of labour in every department not having then taken place so fully as since that period, the profession of the polite and accomplished adventurer, who nicked you out of your money at White's, or bowled you out of it at Marybone, was often united with that of the professed ruffian, who, on Bagshot Heath, or Finchley Common, commanded his brother beau to stand and deliver. There was also a touch of coarseness and hardness about the manners of the times, which has since, in a great degree, been softened and shaded away. It seems

to me, on recollection, as if desperate men had less reluctance then, than now, to embrace the most desperate means of retrieving their fortune. The times were indeed passed, when Anthony-a-Wood mourned over the execution of two men, goodly in person, and of undisputed courage and honour, who were executed without mercy at Oxford, merely because their distress had driven them to raise contributions on the highway. We were still farther removed from the days of " the mad Prince and Poins." And yet, from the number of uninclosed and extensive heaths in the vicinity of the metropolis, and from the less populous state of remote districts, both were frequented by that species of mounted highwaymen, that may possibly become one day unknown, who carried on their trade with something like courtesy; and, like Gibbet in the Beaux Stratagem, piqued themselves on being the best behaved men on the road, and on behaving with all appropriate civility in the exercise of their vocation. A young man, therefore, in my circumstances, was not en-

titled to be highly indignant at the mistake which confounded him with this worshipful class of depredators.

Neither was I offended. On the contrary, I found amusement in alternately exciting, and lulling to sleep, the suspicions of my timorous companion, and in purposely so acting as still farther to puzzle a brain which nature and apprehension had combined to render none of the clearest. When my free conversation had lulled him into complete security, it required only a passing enquiry concerning the direction of his journey, or the nature of the business which occasioned it, to put his suspicions once more in arms. For example, a conversation on the comparative strength and activity of our horses took such a turn as follows:—

"O sir," said my companion, "for the gallop, I grant you; but allow me to say, your horse (although he is a very handsome gelding—that must be owned) has too little bone to be a good roadster. The trot, sir,"

(striking his Bucephalus with his spurs), "the trot is the true pace for a hackney; and, were we near a town, I should like to try that daisy-cutter of yours upon a piece of level road (barring canter) for a quart of claret at the next inn."

"Content, sir," replied I; "and here is a stretch of ground very favourable."

"Hem, ahem," answered my friend with hesitation; "I make it a rule of travelling never to blow my horse between stages; one never knows what occasion he may have to put him to his mettle; and besides, sir, when I said I would match you, I meant with even weight; you ride four stone lighter than I."

"Very well; but I am content to carry weight. Pray what may that portmanteau of yours weigh?"

"My p—p—portmanteau?" replied he hesitating—"O very little—a feather—just a few shirts and stockings."

"I should think it heavier from the ap-

pearance. I'll hold you the quart of claret it makes the odds betwixt our weight."

"You're mistaken, sir, I assure you—quite mistaken," replied my friend, edging off to the side of the road, as was his wont on these alarming occasions.

"Well, I'm willing to venture the wine; or, I will bet you ten pieces to five, that I carry your portmanteau on my croupe, and out-trot you into the bargain."

This proposal raised my friend's alarm to the uttermost. His nose changed from the natural copper hue which it had acquired from many a comfortable cup of claret, or sack, into a palish brassy tint, and his teeth chattered with apprehension at the unveiled audacity of my proposal, which seemed to place the bare-faced plunderer before him in full atrocity. As he faultered for an answer, I relieved him in some degree by a question concerning a steeple, which now became visible, and an observation that we were now so near the village as to run no risk from interruption

upon the road. At this his countenance cleared up; but I easily perceived that it was long ere he forgot a proposal which seemed to him so fraught with suspicion as that which I had now hazarded. I trouble you with this detail of the man's disposition, and the manner in which I practised upon it, because, however trivial in themselves, these particulars were attended by an important influence upon future incidents which will occur in this narrative. At the time, this person's conduct only inspired me with contempt, and confirmed me in an opinion, which I already entertained, that of all the propensities which teach mankind to torment themselves, that of causeless fear is the most irritating, busy, painful, and pitiable.

CHAPTER IV.

> The Scots are poor, cries surly English pride.
> True is the charge; nor by themselves denied.
> Are they not, then, in strictest reason clear,
> Who wisely come to mend their fortunes here?
>
> CHURCHILL.

THERE was, in the days of which I write, an old-fashioned custom upon the English road, which I suspect is now obsolete, or practised only by the vulgar. Journies of length being made on horseback, and, of course, by brief stages, it was usual always to make a halt upon the Sunday in some town where the traveller might attend divine service, and his horse have the benefit of the day of rest, the institution of which is as humane to our brute labourers as profitable to ourselves. A counterpart to this

decent practice, and a remnant of old English hospitality, was, that the landlord of a principal inn laid aside his character of publican upon the seventh day, and invited the guests who chanced to be within his walls to take a part of his family beef and pudding. This invitation was usually complied with by all whose distinguished rank did not induce them to think compliance a derogation; and the proposal of a bottle of wine after dinner, to drink the landlord's health, was the only recompence ever offered or accepted.

I was born a citizen of the world, and my inclination led me into all scenes where my knowledge of mankind could be enlarged; I had, besides, no pretensions to sequester myself on the score of superior dignity, and, therefore, seldom failed to accept of the Sunday's hospitality of mine host, whether of the Garter, Lion, or Bear. The honest publican, dilated into additional consequence by a sense of his own importance, while presiding among the guests on whom it

was his ordinary duty to attend, was in himself an entertaining spectacle; and around his genial orbit, other planets of inferior consequence performed their revolutions. The wits and humourists, the distinguished worthies of the town or village, the apothecary, the attorney, even the curate himself, did not disdain to partake of this hebdomadal festivity. The guests, assembled from different quarters, and following different professions, formed, in language, manners, and sentiments, a curious contrast to each other, not indifferent to those who desired to possess a knowledge of mankind in its varieties.

It was upon such a day, and such an occasion, that my timorous acquaintance and I were about to grace the board of the ruddy-faced host of the Black Bear, in the town of Darlington, and bishoprick of Durham, when our landlord informed us, with a sort of apologetic tone, that there was a Scotch gentleman to dine with us.

" A gentleman ?—what sort of a gentle-

man?" said my companion, somewhat hastily, his mind, I suppose, running upon gentlemen of the pad, as they were then termed.

"Why, a Scotch sort of a gentleman, as I said before," returned mine host; "they are all gentle, ye mun know, though they ha' narra shirt to back; but this is a decentish hallion—a canny North Briton as e'er crossed Berwick-bridge—I trow he's a dealer in cattle."

"Let us have his company, by all means," answered my companion; and then, turning to me, he gave vent to the tenor of his own reflections. "I respect the Scotch, sir; I love and honour the nation for their sense of morality. Men talk of their filth and their poverty, but commend me to sterling honesty, though clad in rags, as the poet saith. I have been credibly assured, sir, by men on whom I can depend, that there was never known such a thing in Scotland as a highway robbery."

"That's because they have nothing to

lose," said mine host, with the chuckle of a self-applauding wit.

" No, no, landlord," answered a strong deep voice behind him, " it's e'en because your English gaugers and supervisors, that you have sent down benorth the Tweed, have ta'en up the trade of thievery over the heads of the native professors."

" Well said, Mr Campbell," answered the landlord; " I did nat think thou'd'st been sa near us, mon. But thou kens I'm an outspoken Yorkshire tyke—And how go markets in the south?"

" Even in the ordinar," replied Mr Campbell; " wise folks buy and sell, and fools are bought and sold."

" But wise men and fools both eat their dinner," answered our jolly entertainer; " and here a comes—as prime a buttock of beef as e'er hungry mon stuck fork in."

So saying, he eagerly whetted his knife, assumed his seat of empire at the head of the board, and loaded the plates of his sundry guests with his good cheer.

This was the first time I had heard the Scottish accent, or, indeed, that I had familiarly met with an individual of the ancient nation by whom it was spoken. Yet, from an early period, they had occupied and interested my imagination. My father, as is well known to you, was of an ancient family in Northumberland, from whose seat I was not very many miles distant. The quarrel betwixt him and his relatives was such, that he scarcely ever mentioned the race from which he sprung, and held as the most contemptible species of vanity, the weakness which is commonly termed family pride. His ambition was only to be distinguished as William Osbaldistone, the first, at least one of the first, merchants on Change; and to have proved him the lineal representative of William the Conqueror, would have far less flattered his vanity than the hum and bustle which his approach was wont to produce among the bulls, bears, and brokers of Stock-alley. He wished, no doubt, that I should remain in such ignorance of my relatives and descent as

might insure a correspondence between my feelings and his own on this subject. But his designs, as will happen occasionally to the wisest, were, in some degree at least, counteracted by a being whom his pride would never have supposed of importance adequate to influence them in any way. His nurse, an old Northumbrian woman, attached to him from his infancy, was the only person connected with his native province for whom he retained any regard; and when fortune dawned upon him, one of the first uses which he made of her favours, was to give Mabel Rickets a place of residence within his household. After the death of my mother, the care of nursing me during my childish illnesses, and of rendering all those tender attentions which infancy exacts from female affection, devolved on old Mabel. Interdicted by her master from speaking to him on the subject of the heaths, glades, and dales of her beloved Northumberland, she poured herself forth to my infant ear in descriptions of the scenes of her youth, and long narratives of the events which tra-

dition declared to have passed amongst them. To these I inclined my ear much more seriously than to graver, but less animated instructors. Even yet, methinks I see old Mabel, her head slightly agitated by the palsy of age, and shaded by a close cap, as white as the driven snow,—her face wrinkled, but still retaining the healthy tinge which it had acquired in rural labour. I think I see her look around on the brick walls and narrow street which presented themselves from our windows, as she concluded with a sigh, the favourite old ditty, which I then preferred, and—why should I not tell the truth—which I still prefer, to all the opera airs ever minted by the capricious brain of an Italian Mus. D.—

> Oh the oak, the ash, and the bonny ivy tree,
> They flourish best at home in the North Country!

Now, in the legends of Mabel, the Scottish nation was ever freshly remembered, with all the embittered declamation of which the narrator was capable. The inhabitants of the opposite frontierserved in her narratives

to fill up the parts which ogres and giants with seven-leagued boots occupy in the ordinary nursery-tales. And how could it be otherwise? Was it not the Black Douglas who slew with his own hand the heir of the Osbaldistone family the day after he took possession of his estate, surprising him and his vassals while solemnizing a feast suited to the occasion? Was it not Wat the Devil who drove all the year-old hogs off the braes of Lanthorn-side, in the very recent days of my grandfather's father? And had we not many a trophy, but, according to old Mabel's version of history, far more honourably gained, to mark our vengeance of these wrongs? Did not Sir Henry Osbaldistone, fifth baron of the name, carry off the fair maid of Fairnington, as Achilles did his Chryseis and Briseis of old, and detain her in his fortress against all the power of her friends, supported by the most mighty Scottish chiefs of warlike fame? And had not our swords shone foremost at most of those fields in which England was victorious over

her rival? All our family renown was acquired,—all our family misfortunes were occasioned, by the northern wars.

Warmed by such tales, I looked upon the Scottish people, during my childhood, as a race hostile by nature to the more southern inhabitants of this realm; and this view of the matter was not much corrected by the language which my father sometimes held with respect to them. He had engaged in some large speculations concerning oak-woods, the property of Highland proprietors, and alleged that he found them much more ready to make bargains, and extort earnest of the purchase-money, than punctual in complying on their side with the terms of the engagements. The Scotch mercantile men, whom he was under the necessity of employing as a sort of middle-men on these occasions, were also suspected by my father of having secured, by one means or other, more than their own share of the profit which ought to have accrued. In short, if Mabel complained of the Scot-

tish arms in ancient times, Mr Osbaldistone inveighed no less against the arts of these modern Sinons; and between them, though without any fixed purpose of doing so, they impressed my youthful mind with a sincere aversion to the northern inhabitants of Britain, as a people blood-thirsty in time of war, treacherous during truce, interested, selfish, avaricious, and tricky in the business of peaceful life, and having few good qualities, unless there should be accounted such, a ferocity which resembled courage in martial affairs, and in commerce a sort of wily craft, which supplied the place of wisdom, in the ordinary commerce of mankind. In justification, or apology, for those who entertained such prejudices, I must remark, that the Scotch of the period were guilty of similar injustice to the English, whom they branded universally as a race of purse-proud arrogant epicures. Such seeds of national dislike remained between the two countries, the natural consequences of their existence as separate and rival states.

We have seen recently the breath of a demagogue blow these sparks into a temporary flame, which I sincerely hope is now extinguished in its own ashes.*

It was, then, with an impression of dislike, that I contemplated the first Scotchman I chanced to meet in society. There was much about him that coincided with my previous conceptions. He had the hard features and athletic form, said to be peculiar to his country, together with the national intonation and slow pedantic mode of expression, arising from the desire to avoid peculiarities of idiom or dialect. I could also observe the caution and shrewdness of his country in many of the observations which he made, and the answers which he returned. But I was not prepared for an air of easy self-possession and superiority, with which he seemed to predomi-

* This seems to have been written about the time of Wilkes and Liberty.

nate over the company into which he was thrown, as it were by accident. His dress was as coarse as it could be, being still decent; and, at a time when great expence was lavished upon the wardrobe, even of the lowest who pretended to the character of gentlemen, this indicated mediocrity of circumstances, if not poverty. His conversation intimated, that he was engaged in the cattle-trade, no very dignified professional pursuit. And yet, under these disadvantages, he seemed, as a matter of course, to treat the rest of the company with the cool and condescending politeness, which implies a real, or imagined, superiority over those towards whom it is used. When he gave his opinion on any point, it was with that easy tone of confidence used by those superior to their society in rank or information, as if what he said could not be doubted, and was not to be questioned. Mine host and his Sunday guests, after an effort or two to support their consequence by noise and bold averment, sunk gradually

under the authority of Mr Campbell, who thus fairly possessed himself of the lead in the conversation. I was tempted, from curiosity, to dispute the ground with him myself, confiding in my knowledge of the world, extended, as it was, by my residence abroad, and in the stores with which a tolerable education had possessed my mind. In the latter respect, he offered no competition, and it was easy to see that his natural powers had never been cultivated by education. But I found him much better acquainted than I was myself with the present state of France, the character of the Duke of Orleans, who had just succeeded to the regency of that kingdom, and that of the statesmen by whom he was surrounded; and his shrewd, caustic, and somewhat satirical remarks, were those of a man who had been a close observer of the affairs of that country.

On the subject of politics, Campbell observed a silence and moderation which might arise from caution. The divisions of

Whig and Tory then shook England to her very centre, and a powerful party, engaged in the Jacobite interest, menaced the dynasty of Hanover, which had been just established on the throne. Every ale-house resounded with the brawls of contending politicians, and as mine host's politics were of that liberal description which quarrelled with no good customer, his hebdomadal visitants were often divided in their opinion as irreconcileably as if he had feasted the Common Council. The curate and the apothecary, with a little man, who made no boast of his vocation, but who, from the flourish and snap of his fingers, I believe to have been the barber, strongly espoused the cause of high church and the Stuart line. The exciseman, as in duty bound, and the attorney, who looked to some petty office under the crown, together with my fellow-traveller, who seemed to enter keenly into the contest, staunchly supported the cause of King George and the Protestant suc-

cession. Dire was the screaming—deep the oaths! Each party appealed to Mr Campbell, anxious, it seemed, to elicit his approbation.

"You are a Scotchman, sir; a gentleman of your country must stand up for hereditary right," cried one party.

"You are a Presbyterian," assumed the other class of disputants; "you cannot be a friend to arbitrary power."

"Gentlemen," said our Scotch oracle, after having gained, with some difficulty, a moment's pause, "I havena much dubitation that King George weel deserves the predilection of his friends; and if he can haud the grip he has gotten, why, doubtless, he may make the gauger, here, a commissioner of the revenue, and confer on our friend, Mr Quitam, the preferment of solicitor-general; and he may also grant some good deed or reward to this honest gentleman who is sitting upon his portmanteau, which he prefers to a chair: And, question-

less, King James is also a grateful person, and when he gets his hand in play, he may, if he be so minded, make this reverend gentleman arch-prelate of Canterbury, and Dr Mixit chief physician to his household, and commit his royal beard to the care of my friend Latherum. But as I doubt mickle whether any of the competing sovereigns would give Rob Campbell a tass of aqua-vitæ if he lacked it, I give my vote and interest to Jonathan Brown, our landlord, to be the King and Prince of Skinkers, conditionally that he fetches us another bottle as good as the last."

This sally was received with general applause, in which the landlord cordially joined; and when he had given orders for fulfilling the condition on which his preferment was to depend, he failed not to acquaint them, "that, for as peaceable a gentleman as Mr Campbell was, he was, moreover, as bold as a lion—seven highwaymen had he defeated with his single arm, that beset him as he came from Whitson-Tryste."

"Thou art deceived, friend Jonathan," said Campbell, interrupting him; "they were but barely two, and two cowardly loons as man would wish to meet withal."

"And did you, sir, really," said my fellow-traveller, edging his chair (I should have said his portmanteau) nearer to Mr Campbell, "really and actually beat two highwaymen yourself alone?"

"In troth did I, sir," replied Campbell; "and I think it nae great thing to make a sang about."

"Upon my word, sir," replied my acquaintance, "I should be happy to have the pleasure of your company upon my journey—I go northward, sir."

This piece of gratuitous information concerning the route he proposed to himself, the first I had heard my companion bestow upon any one, failed to excite the corresponding confidence of the Scotchman.

"We can scarce travel together," he replied, drily. "You, sir, doubtless, are well mounted, and I, for the present, travel

upon foot, or on a Highland shelty, that does not help me much faster forward."

So saying, he called for a reckoning for the wine, and throwing down the price of the additional bottle which he had himself introduced, rose as if to take leave of us. My companion made up to him, and, taking him by the button, drew him aside into one of the windows. I could not help overhearing him pressing something;—I supposed his company upon the journey, which Mr Campbell seemed to decline.

" I will pay your charges, sir," said the traveller, in a tone, as if he thought the argument should bear down all opposition.

" It is quite impossible," said Campbell, somewhat contemptuously; " I have business at Rothbury."

" But I am in no great hurry; I can ride out of the way, and never miss a day or so for good company."

" Upon my faith, sir," said Campbell, " I cannot render you the service you seem to desiderate. I am," he added, drawing

himself up haughtily, " travelling on my own private affairs, and if ye will act by my advisement, sir, ye will unite yourself with no stranger on the road, nor communicate your line of journey to those who are asking ye no questions about it." He then extricated his button, not very ceremoniously, from the hold which detained him, and, coming up to me as the company were dispersing, observed, " Your friend, sir, is too communicative, considering the nature of his trust."

" That gentleman," I replied, looking towards the traveller, " is no friend of mine, but an acquaintance whom I picked up on the road. I know neither his name nor business, and you seem to be deeper in his confidence than I am."

" I only meant," he replied hastily, " that he seems a thought rash in conferring the honour of his company on those who desire it not."

" The gentleman," replied I, " is best judge of his own affairs, and I should be

sorry to constitute myself a judge of them in any respect."

Mr Campbell made no farther observation, but merely wished me a good journey, and the party dispersed for the evening.

Next day I parted company with my timid companion, as I left the great northern road to turn more westerly in the direction of Osbaldistone Manor, my uncle's seat. I cannot tell whether he felt relieved or embarrassed by my departure, considering the dubious light in which he seemed to regard me. For my own part, his tremors ceased to amuse me, and, to say the truth, I was heartily glad to get rid of him.

CHAPTER V.

How melts my beating heart! as I behold
Each lovely nymph, our island's boast and pride,
Push on the generous steed, that sweeps along
O'er rough, o'er smooth, nor heeds the steepy hill,
Nor faulters in the extended vale below.

The Chace.

I APPROACHED my native north, for such I esteemed it, with that enthusiasm which romantic and wild scenery inspires in the lovers of nature. No longer interrupted by the babble of my companion, I could now remark the difference which the country exhibited from that through which I had hitherto travelled. The streams now more properly deserved the name, for, instead of slumbering stagnant among reeds and

willows, they brawled along beneath the shade of natural copsewood; were now hurried down declivities, and now purled more leisurely, but still in active motion, through little lonely vallies, which, opening on the road from time to time, seemed to invite the traveller to explore their recesses. The Cheviots rose before me in frowning majesty; not, indeed, with the sublime variety of rock and cliff which characterize mountains of the primary class, but huge, round-headed, and clothed with a dark robe of russet, gaining, by their extent and desolate appearance, an influence upon the imagination, which possessed a character of its own.

The abode of my fathers, which I was now approaching, was situated in a glen, or narrow valley, which ran up among those hills. Extensive estates, which once belonged to the family, had been long dissipated by the misfortunes or misconduct of my ancestors; but enough was still attached to the old mansion, to give my uncle the title of a

man of large property. This he employed (as I was given to understand by some enquiries which I made on the road) in maintaining the prodigal hospitality of a northern squire of the period, which he deemed essential to his family dignity.

From the summit of an eminence, I had already had a distant view of Osbaldistone Hall, a large and antiquated edifice, peeping out from a Druidical grove of huge oaks; and I was directing my course towards it, as straightly and as speedily as the windings of a very indifferent road would permit, when my horse, tired as he was, pricked up his ears at the enlivening notes of a pack of hounds in full cry, cheered by the occasional bursts of a French horn, which in those days was a constant accompaniment to the chase. I made no doubt that the pack was my uncle's, and drew up my horse with the purpose of suffering the hunters to pass without notice, aware that a hunting field was not the proper scene to introduce myself to a keen sportsman, and

determined, when they had passed on, to proceed to the mansion-house at my own pace, and there to await the return of the proprietor from his sport. I paused, therefore, on a rising ground, and, not unmoved by the sense of interest which that species of sylvan sport is so much calculated to inspire, (although my mind was not at the moment very accessible to impressions of this nature,) I expected with some eagerness the appearance of the huntsmen.

The fox, hard run, and nearly spent, first made his appearance from the copse which clothed the right-hand side of the valley. His drooping brush, his soiled appearance, and jaded trot, proclaimed his fate impending; and the carrion crow, which hovered over him, already considered poor Reynard as soon to be his prey. He crossed the stream which divides the little valley, and was dragging himself up a ravine on the other side of its wild banks, when the headmost hounds, followed by the rest of the pack at full cry, burst from the coppice,

followed by the huntsman, and three or four riders. The dogs pursued the trace of Reynard with unerring instinct; and the hunters followed with reckless haste, regardless of the broken and difficult nature of the ground. They were tall, stout young men, well mounted, and dressed in green and red, the uniform of a sporting association, formed under the auspices of old Sir Hildebrand Osbaldistone. My cousins! thought I, as they swept past me. The next reflection was, what is my reception likely to be among these worthy successors of Nimrod? and how improbable is it, that I, knowing little or nothing of rural sports, shall find myself at ease, or happy, in my uncle's family. A vision that passed me interrupted these reflections.

It was a young lady, the loveliness of whose very striking features was enhanced by the animation of the chase and the glow of the exercise, mounted on a beautiful horse, jet black, unless where he was flecked by spots of the snow-white foam which embossed his

bridle. She wore, what was then somewhat unusual, a coat, vest, and hat, resembling those of a man, which fashion has since called a riding-habit. The mode had been introduced while I was in France, and was perfectly new to me. Her long black hair streamed on the breeze, having in the hurry of the chase escaped from the ribbon which bound it. Some very broken ground through which she guided her horse with the most admirable address and presence of mind, retarded her course, and brought her closer to me than any of the other riders had passed. I had, therefore, a full view of her uncommonly fine face and person, to which an inexpressible charm was added by the wild gaiety of the scene, and the romance of her singular dress and unexpected appearance. As she past me, her horse made, in his impetuosity, an irregular movement, just while, coming once more upon open ground, she was again putting him to his speed. It served as an apology for me to ride close up to her, as if to her assistance.

There was, however, no cause for alarm ; it was not a stumble, nor a false step ; and if it had, the fair Amazon had too much self-possession to have been deranged by it. She thanked my good intentions, however, by a smile, and I felt encouraged to put my horse to the same pace, and to keep in her immediate neighbourhood. The clamour of "Whoop, dead, dead!" and the corresponding flourish of the French horn, soon announced to us that there was no more occasion for haste, since the chase was at a close. One of the young men whom we had seen approached us, waving the brush of the fox in triumph, as if to upbraid my fair companion.

" I see," she replied,—" I see ; but make no noise about it ; if Phœbe," she said, patting the neck of the beautiful animal on which she rode, " had not got among the cliffs, you would have had little cause for boasting."

They met as she spoke, and I observed them both look at me and converse a mo-

ment in an under tone, the young lady apparently pressing the sportsman to do something which he declined shyly, and with a sort of sheepish sullenness. She instantly turned her horse's head towards me, saying,—"Well, well, Thornie, if you wont, I must, that's all.—Sir," she continued, addressing me; "I have been endeavouring to persuade this cultivated young gentleman to make enquiries at you, whether, in the course of your travels in these parts, you have heard any thing of a friend of ours, one Mr Francis Osbaldistone, who has been for some days expected at Osbaldistone Hall?"

I was too happy to acknowledge myself to be the party enquired after, and to express my thanks for the obliging enquiries of the young lady.

"In that case, sir," she rejoined, "as my kinsman's politeness seems to be still slumbering, you will permit me (though I suppose it is highly improper) to stand mistress of ceremonies, and to present to

you young Squire Thorncliff Osbaldistone, your cousin, and Die Vernon, who has also the honour to be your accomplished cousin's poor kinswoman."

There was a mixture of boldness, satire, and simplicity in the manner in which Miss Vernon pronounced these words. My knowledge of life was sufficient to enable me to take up a corresponding tone as I expressed my gratitude to her for her condescension, and my extreme pleasure at having met with them. To say the truth, the compliment was so expressed, that the lady might easily appropriate the greater share of it, for Thorncliffe seemed an arrant country bumpkin, awkward, shy, and somewhat sulky withal. He shook hands with me, however, and then intimated his intention of leaving me that he might help the huntsman and his brothers to couple up the hounds, a purpose which he rather communicated by way of information to Miss Vernon than as apology to me.

"There he goes," said the young lady,

following him with eyes in which disdain was admirably painted,—" the prince of grooms and cock-fighters, and blackguard horse-coursers. But there is not one of them to mend another.—Have you read Markham?" said Miss Osbaldistone.

" Read whom, ma'am?—I do not even remember the author's name."

" O lud! on what a strand are you wrecked?—A poor forlorn and ignorant stranger, unacquainted with the very Alcoran of the savage tribe whom you are come to reside with—Never to have heard of Markham, the most celebrated author on farriery! then I fear you are equally a stranger to the more modern names of Gibson and Bartlett?"

" I am, indeed, Miss Vernon."

" And do you not blush to own it?—Why, we must forswear your alliance. Then, I suppose, you can neither give a ball, nor a mash, nor a horn?"

" I confess I trust all these matters to an ostler, or to my groom."

"Incredible carelessness!—And you cannot shoe a horse, or cut his mane and tail; or worm a dog, or crop his ears, or cut his dew-claws; or reclaim a hawk, or give him his casting stones, or direct his diet when he is sealed; or—"

"To sum my insignificance in one word, I am profoundly ignorant in all these rural accomplishments."

"Then, in the name of Heaven, Mr Francis Osbaldistone, what *can* you do?"

"Very little to the purpose, Miss Vernon; something, however, I can pretend to—When my groom has dressed my horse, I can ride upon him, and when my hawk is in the field, I can fly him."

"Can you do this?" said the young lady, putting her horse to a canter.

There was a sort of rude over-grown fence crossed the path before us, with a gate, composed of pieces of wood rough from the forest; I was about to move forward to open it, when Miss Vernon cleared the obstruction at a flying leap. I was

bound, in point of honour, to follow, and was in a moment again at her side.

"There are hopes of you yet," she said. "I was afraid you had been a very degenerate Osbaldistone. But what on earth brings you to Cub-Castle?—for so the neighbours have christened this hunting-hall of ours. You might have staid away, I suppose, if you would?"

I felt I was by this time on a very intimate footing with my beautiful apparition, and therefore replied in a confidential under-tone,—"Indeed, my dear Miss Vernon, I might have considered it as a sacrifice to be a temporary resident in Osbaldistone Hall, the inmates being such as you describe them; but I am convinced there is one exception that will make amends for all deficiencies."

"O, you mean Rashleigh?" said Miss Vernon.

"Indeed I do not; I was thinking—forgive me—of some person much nearer me."

"I suppose it would be proper not to understand your civility?—But that is not my way—I don't make a curtsey for it, because I am sitting on horseback. But, seriously, I deserve your exception, for I am the only conversible being about the Hall, except the old priest and Rashleigh."

"And who is Rashleigh, for Heaven's sake?"

"Rashleigh is one who would fain have every one like him for his own sake.—He is Sir Hildebrand's youngest son—about your own age, but not so—not well looking, in short. But Nature has given him a mouthful of common sense, and the priest has added a bushelfull of learning—he is what we all call a very clever man in this country, where clever men are scarce. Bred to the church, but in no hurry to take orders."

"To the Catholic Church?"

"The Catholic Church! what church else?—But I forgot, they told me you are a heretic. Is that true, Mr Osbaldistone?"

"I must not deny the charge."

"And yet you have been abroad, and in Catholic countries?"

"For nearly four years."

"You have seen convents?"

"Often; but I have not seen much in them which recommended the Catholic religion."

"Are not the inhabitants happy?"

"Some are unquestionably so, whom either a profound sense of devotion, or an experience of the persecutions and misfortunes of the world, or a natural apathy of temper, has led into retirement. Those who have adopted a life of seclusion from sudden and overstrained enthusiasm, or in hasty resentment of some disappointment or mortification, are very miserable. The quickness of sensation soon returns, and, like the wilder animals in a menagerie, they are restless under confinement, while others muse or fatten in cells of no larger dimensions than theirs."

"And what," continued Miss Vernon,

"becomes of those victims who are condemned to a convent by the will of others? what do they resemble? especially, what do they resemble, if they are born to enjoy life, and feel its blessings?"

"They are like imprisoned singing-birds, condemned to wear out their lives in confinement, which they try to beguile by the exercise of accomplishments, which would have adorned society, had they been left at large."

"I shall be," returned Miss Vernon—"that is," said she, correcting herself,—"I would be rather like the wild hawk, who, barred the free exercise of his soar through heaven, will dash himself to pieces against the bars of his cage. But to return to Rashleigh," said she, in a more lively tone, "you will think him the pleasantest man you ever saw in your life, Mr Osbaldistone, that is for a week at least. If he could find out a blind mistress, never man would be so secure of conquest; but the eyes break the spell that enchants the ear.

But here we are in the court of the old hall, which looks as wild and old-fashioned as any of its inmates. There is no great toilette kept at Osbaldistone, you must know; but I must take off these things, they are so unpleasantly warm, and the hat hurts my forehead too," continued the lively girl, taking it off, and shaking down a profusion of sable ringlets, which, half laughing, half blushing, she separated with her white slender fingers, in order to clear them away from her beautiful face and piercing hazel eyes. If there was any coquetry in the action, it was well disguised by the careless indifference of her manner. I could not not help saying, "that, judging of the family from what I saw, I should suppose the toilette a very unnecessary care."

"That's very politely said; though, perhaps, I ought not to understand in what sense it was meant," replied Miss Vernon; "but you will see a better apology for a little negligence, when you meet the Orsons you are to live amongst, whose forms no toilette

could improve. But, as I said before, the old dinner-bell will clang, or rather clank, in a few minutes—it cracked of its own accord at the day of the landing of King Willie, and my uncle, respecting its prophetic talent, would never permit it to be mended. So do you hold my palfrey, like a duteous knight, until I send some more humble squire to relieve you of the charge."

She threw me the rein as if we had been acquainted from our childhood, jumped from her saddle, tripped across the court-yard, and entered at a side-door, leaving me in admiration of her beauty, and astonished with the overfrankness of her manners, which seemed the more extraordinary at a time when the dictates of politeness, flowing from the court of the Grand Monarque Louis XIV., prescribed to the fair sex an unusual severity of decorum. I was left awkwardly enough stationed in the centre of the court of the old hall, mounted on one horse, and holding another in my hand. The building afforded little to interest a stranger, had

I been disposed to consider it attentively; the sides of the quadrangle were of various architecture, and with their stone-shafted latticed windows, projecting turrets, and massive architraves, resembled the inside of a convent, or of one of the older and less splendid colleges of Oxford. I called for a domestic, but was for some time totally unattended to; which was the more provoking, as I could perceive I was the object of curiosity to several servants, both male and female, from different parts of the building, who popped out their heads and withdrew them, like rabbits in a warren, before I could make a direct appeal to the attention of any individual. The return of the huntsmen and hounds relieved me from my embarrassment, and with some difficulty I got one clown to relieve me of the charge of the horses, and another stupid boor to guide me to the presence of Sir Hildebrand. This service he performed with much such grace and good will, as a peasant who is compelled to act as guide

to a hostile patrole, and in the same manner I was obliged to guard against his deserting me in the labyrinth of low-vaulted passages which conducted to "Stun Hall," as he called it, where I was to be introduced to the gracious presence of my uncle.

We did, however, at length reach a long vaulted room, floored with stone, where a range of oaken tables, of a weight and size too massive ever to be moved aside, were already covered for dinner. This venerable apartment, which had witnessed the feast of several generations of the Osbaldistone family, bore also evidence of their success in field-sports. Huge antlers of deer, which might have been the trophies of the hunting of Chevy Chace, were ranged around the walls, interspersed with the stuffed skins of badgers, otters, martins, and other animals of chace. Amidst some remnants of old armour, which had, perhaps, served against the Scotch, hung the more valued weapons of Sylvan war, cross-bows, guns of various device and construc-

tion, nets, fishing-rods, otter spears, hunting poles, with many other singular devices and engines for taking or killing game. A few old pictures, dimmed with smoke, and stained with March beer, hung on the walls, representing knights and ladies, honoured, doubtless, and renowned in their day; these frowning fearfully from huge bushes of wig and of beard; and those looking delightfully with all their might at the roses which they brandished in their hands.

I had just time to give a glance at these matters, when about twelve blue-coated servants burst into the hall with much tumult and talk, each rather employed in directing his comrades than in discharging his own duty. Some brought blocks and billets to the fire, which roared, blazed, and ascended, half in smoke, half in flame, up a huge tunnel, with an opening wide enough to accommodate a stone-seat within its ample vault, and which was fronted, by way of chimney-piece, with a huge piece of heavy architecture, where the monsters of herald-

ry, embodied by the art of some Northumbrian chisel, grinned and ramped in red free stone, now japanned by the smoke of centuries. Others of these old-fashioned serving men bore huge smoking dishes, loaded with substantial fare; others brought in cups, flaggons, bottles, yea barrels of liquor. All tramped, kicked, plunged, shouldered, and jostled, doing as little service with as much tumult as could well be imagined. At length, while the dinner was, after various efforts, in the act of being arranged upon the board, the "clamour much of men and dogs," the cracking of whips, calculated for the intimidation of the latter, voices loud and high, steps which, impressed by the heavy-heeled boots of the period, clattered like those in the statue of the *Festin de pierre*,* announced the arrival of those for whose benefit the preparations were made. The hubbub among the servants rather increased than diminished as

* Now called *Don Juan*.

this crisis approached,—some called to make haste, others to take time,—some exhorted to stand out of the way, and make room for Sir Hildebrand and the young squires,—some to close round the table, and be *in* the way,—some to open, some to shut a pair of folding doors, which divided the hall from a sort of gallery, as I afterwards learned, or withdrawing room, fitted up with black wainscoat. Opened the doors were at length, and in rushed curs and men,—eight dogs, the domestic chaplain, the village doctor, my six cousins, and my uncle.

CHAPTER V.

The rude hall rocks—they come, they come,—
The din of voices shakes the dome;—
In stalk the various forms, and, drest
In varying morion—varying vest,
All march with haughty step—all proudly shake the crest.

PENROSE.

If Sir Hildebrand Osbaldistone was in no hurry to greet his nephew, of whose arrival he must have been informed for some time, he had important avocations to allege in excuse. "Had seen thee sooner, lad," he exclaimed, after a rough shake of the hand, and a hearty welcome to Osbaldistone Hall, "but had to see the hounds kennelled first. Thou art welcome to the hall, lad—here is thy cousin Percie, thy cousin Thornie, and thy cousin John—your cousin Dick, your cousin Wilfred,

and—stay, where's Rashleigh—aye, here's Rashleigh——take thy long body aside, Thornie, and let's see thy brother a bit—your cousin Rashleigh—So thy father has thought on the old hall, and old Sir Hildebrand at last—better late than never—Thou art welcome, lad, and there's enough—Where's my little Die—aye, here she comes—this is my niece Die, my wife's brother's daughter—the prettiest girl in our dales, be the other who she may—and so now let's to the sirloin."—

To gain some idea of the person who held this language, you must suppose, my dear Tresham, a man aged about sixty, in a hunting suit which had once been richly laced, but whose splendour had been tarnished by many a November and December storm. Sir Hildebrand, notwithstanding the abruptness of his present manner, had, at one period of his life, known courts and camps; had held a commission in the army which encamped on Hounslow Heath previous to the Revolution, and, recom-

mended perhaps by his religion, had been knighted about the same period by the unfortunate and ill-advised James II. But his dreams of further preferment, if he ever entertained any, had died away at the crisis which drove his patron from the throne, and since that period he had spent a sequestered life upon his native domains. Notwithstanding his rusticity, however, Sir Hildebrand retained much of the exterior of a gentleman, and appeared among his sons as the remains of a Corinthian pillar, defaced and overgrown with moss and lichen, might have looked, if contrasted with the rough, unhewn masses of upright stones in Stonhenge, or any other druidical temple. The sons were, indeed, heavy unadorned blocks as the eye would desire to look upon. Tall, stout, and comely, all and each of the five eldest seemed to want alike the Promethean fire of intellect, and the exterior grace and manner, which, in the polished world, sometimes supplies mental deficiency. Their most valuable moral quality

seemed to be the good-humour and content which was expressed in their heavy features, and their only pretence to accomplishment was their dexterity in the field-sports, for which alone they lived. The strong Gyas, and the strong Cloanthus, are not less distinguished by the poet, than the strong Percival, the strong Thorncliff, the strong John, Richard, Wilfred Osbaldistones, were by outward appearance.

But, as if to indemnify herself for an uniformity so uncommon in her productions, Dame Nature had rendered Rashleigh Osbaldistone a striking contrast in person and manner, and, as I afterwards learned, in temper and talents, not only to his brothers, but to most men whom I had hitherto met with. When Percie, Thornie, and Company had respectively nodded, grinned, and presented their shoulder, rather than their hand, as their father named them to their new kinsman, Rashleigh stepped forward, and welcomed me to Osbaldistone Hall, with the air and manner of a man of

this world. His appearance was not in itself prepossessing. He was of low stature, whereas all his brethren seemed to be descendants of Anak; and, while they were handsomely formed, Rashleigh, though strong in person, was bull-necked and cross-made, and, from some early injury in his youth, had an imperfection in his gait, so much resembling an absolute halt, that many alleged that it formed the obstacle to his taking orders, the church of Rome, as is well known, admitting none to the clerical profession who labours under any personal deformity. Others, however, ascribed this unsightly defect to a mere awkward habit, and contended, that it did not amount to a personal disqualification from holy orders.

The features of Rashleigh were such, as, having looked upon, we in vain wish to banish from our memory, to which they recur as objects of painful curiosity, although we dwell upon them with a feeling of dislike, and even of disgust. It was not the actual plainness of his face, taken separately from

the meaning, which made this strong impression. His features were, indeed, irregular, but they were by no means vulgar; and his keen dark eyes, and shaggy eyebrows, redeemed his face from the charge of common-place ugliness. But there was in these eyes an expression of art and design, and, on provocation, a ferocity tempered by caution, which nature had made obvious to the most ordinary physiognomist, perhaps with the same intention that she has given the rattle to the poisonous snake. As if to compensate him for these disadvantages of exterior, Rashleigh Osbaldistone was possessed of a voice the most soft, mellow, and rich in its tones that I ever heard, and was at no loss for language of every sort suited to so fine an organ. His first sentence of welcome was hardly ended, ere I internally agreed with Miss Vernon, that my new kinsman would make an instant conquest of a mistress whose ears alone were to judge his cause. He was about to place himself beside me at dinner, but Miss

Vernon, who, as the only female in the family, arranged all such matters according to her own pleasure, contrived that I should sit betwixt Thorncliff and her, and it can scarce be doubted that I favoured this more advantageous arrangement.

"I want to speak with you," she said, "and I have placed honest Thornie betwixt Rashleigh and you on purpose. He will be—

> Featherbed 'twixt castle wall
> And heavy brunt of cannon ball;

while I, your earliest acquaintance in this intellectual family, ask of you how you like us all?"

"A very comprehensive question, Miss Vernon, considering how short while I have been at Osbaldistone Hall."

"O, the philosophy of our family lies on the surface—there are minute shades distinguishing the individuals, which require the eye of an intelligent observer; but the spe-

cies, as naturalists, I believe, call it, may be distinguished and characterized at once."

"My five elder cousins, then, are, I presume, of pretty nearly the same character."

"Yes, they form a happy compound of sot, game-keeper, bully, horse-jockey, and fool; but, as they say there cannot be found two leaves on the same tree exactly alike, so these happy ingredients, being mingled in somewhat various proportions in each individual, make an agreeable variety for those who like to study character."

"Give me a sketch, if you please, Miss Vernon."

"You shall have them all in a family-piece, at full length—the favour is too easily granted to be refused. Percie, the son and heir, has more of the sot than of the game-keeper, bully, horse-jockey, or fool—My precious Thornie is more of the bully than the sot, game-keeper, jockey, or fool—John, who sleeps whole weeks amongst the hills, has most of the game-keeper—The jockey is most powerful with Dickon, who rides

two hundred miles by day and night to be bought and sold at a horse-race—And the fool predominates so much over Wilfred's other qualities, that he may be termed a fool positive."

"A goodly collection, Miss Vernon, and the individual varieties belong to a most interesting species; but is there no room on the canvas for Sir Hildebrand?"

"I love my uncle," was her reply: "I owe him some kindness, (such it was meant for at least,) and I will leave you to draw his picture yourself, when you know him better."

"Come," thought I to myself, "I am glad there is some forbearance; after all, who would have looked for such bitter satire from a creature so young and so exquisitely beautiful?"

"You are thinking of me," she said, bending her dark eyes on me, as if she meant to pierce through my very soul.

"I certainly was," I replied with some embarrassment at the determined sudden-

ness of the question, and then endeavouring to give a complimentary turn to my frank avowal. "How is it possible I should think of any thing else, seated as I have the happiness to be?"

She smiled with such an expression of concentrated haughtiness as she alone could have thrown into her countenance. "I must inform you at once, Mr Osbaldistone, that compliments are entirely lost upon me; do not, therefore, throw away your pretty sayings—they serve fine gentlemen who travel in the country, instead of the toys, beads, and bracelets, which navigators carry to propitiate the savage inhabitants of newly discovered countries. Do not exhaust your stock in trade—you will find natives in Northumberland to whom your fine things will recommend you—on me they would be utterly thrown away, for I happen to know their real value."

I was silenced and confounded.

"You remind me at this moment," said

the young lady, resuming her lively and indifferent manner, "of the fairy tale, where the man finds all the money which he had carried to market suddenly changed into pieces of slate. I have cried down and ruined your whole stock of complimentary discourse by one unlucky observation. But, come, never mind it—You are belied, Mr Osbaldistone, unless you have much better conversation than these *fadeurs*, which every gentleman with a toupet thinks himself obliged to recite to an unfortunate girl, merely because she wears silk and gauze, while he wears superfine cloth with embroidery. Your natural paces, as any of my five cousins might say, are far preferable to your complimentary amble. Endeavour to forget my unlucky sex; call me Tom Vernon, if you have a mind, but speak to me as you would to a friend and companion; you have no idea how much I shall like you."

"That would be a bribe, indeed," returned I.

"Again!" replied Miss Vernon, holding up her finger; "I told you I would not bear the shadow of a compliment. And now, when you have pledged my uncle, who threatens you with what he calls a brimmer, I will tell you what you think of me."

The bumper being pledged by me, as a dutiful nephew, and some other general intercourse of the table having taken place, the continued and business-like clang of knives and forks, and the devotion of cousin Thorncliffe on my right hand, and cousin Dickon, who sate on Miss Vernon's left, to the huge quantities of meat with which they heaped their plates, made them serve as two occasional partitions, separating us from the rest of the company, and leaving us to our *tête-a-tête*. "And now," said I, "give me leave to ask you frankly, Miss Vernon, what you suppose I am thinking of you?—I could tell you what I really *do* think, but you have interdicted praise."

"I do not want your assistance. I am

conjuror enough to tell your thoughts without it. 'You need not open the casement of your bosom; I see through it. You think me a strange bold girl, half coquette, half romp; desirous of attracting attention by the freedom of her manners and loudness of her conversation, because she is ignorant of what the Spectator calls the softer graces of the sex; and perhaps you think I have some particular plan of storming you into admiration. I should be sorry to shock your self-opinion, but you were never more mistaken. All the confidence I have reposed in you, I would have given as readily to your father, if I thought he could have understood me. I am in this happy family as much secluded from intelligent listeners as Sancho in the Sierra Morena, and when opportunity offers, I must speak or die. I assure you I would not have told you a word of all this curious intelligence, had I cared a pin who knew it or knew it not."

"It is very cruel in you, Miss Vernon, to take away all particular marks of favour

from your communications, but I must receive them on your own terms.—You have not included Mr Rashleigh Osbaldistone in your domestic sketches."

She shrunk, I thought, at this remark, and hastily answered, in a much lower tone, "Not a word of Rashleigh! His ears are so acute when his selfishness is interested, that the sounds would reach him even through the mass of Thorncliffe's person, stuffed as it is with beef, venison-pasty, and pudding."

"Yes," I replied; "but peeping past the living screen which divides us, before I put the question, I perceived that Mr Rashleigh's chair was empty—he has left the table."

"I would not have you be too sure of that," Miss Vernon replied. "Take my advice, and when you speak of Rashleigh, get up to the top of Otterscope-hill, where you can see for twenty miles round you in every direction—stand on the very peak, and speak in whispers; and, after all, don't

be too sure that the bird of the air shall not carry the matter. Rashleigh has been my tutor for four years; we are mutually tired of each other, and we shall heartily rejoice at our approaching separation."

"Mr Rashleigh leaves Osbaldistone-Hall, then?"

"Yes, in a few days;—did you not know that?—Your father must keep his resolutions much more secret than Sir Hildebrand. Why, when my uncle was informed that you were to be his guest for some time, and that your father desired to have one of his hopeful sons to fill up the lucrative situation in his counting-house, which was vacant by your obstinacy, Mr Francis, the good knight held a *cour pleniere* of all his family, including the butler, housekeeper, and gamekeeper. This reverend assembly of the peers and household officers of Osbaldistone Hall was not convoked, as you may suppose, to elect your substitute, because, as Rashleigh alone possessed more arithmetic than was necessary to

calculate the odds on a fighting cock, none but he could be supposed qualified for the situation. But some solemn sanction was necessary for transforming Rashleigh's destination from starving as a Catholic priest, to thriving as a wealthy banker; and it was not without some reluctance that the acquiescence of the assembly was obtained to such an act of degradation."

" I can conceive the scruples—but how were they got over?"

" By the general wish, I believe, to get Rashleigh out of the house," replied Miss Vernon. " Although youngest of the family, he has somehow or other got the entire management of all the others; and every one is sensible of the subjection, though they cannot shake it off. If any one opposes him, he is sure to rue having done so before the year goes about; and if you do him a very important service, you may rue it still more."

" At that rate," answered I, smiling, " I should look about me; for I have been

the cause, however unintentionally, of his change of situation."

"Yes! and whether he regards it as an advantage or disadvantage, he will owe you a grudge for it—But here come cheese, radishes, and a bumper to church and king, the hint for chaplains and ladies to disappear; and I, the sole representative of womanhood at Osbaldistone Hall, retreat, as in duty bound."

She vanished as she spoke, leaving me in astonishment at the mingled character of shrewdness, audacity, and frankness which her conversation displayed. I despair conveying to you the least idea of her manner, although I have, as nearly as I can remember, imitated her language. In fact, there was a mixture of untaught simplicity, as well as native shrewdness and haughty boldness in her manner, and all were modified and recommended by the play of the most beautiful features I had ever beheld. It is not to be thought that, however strange and uncommon I might think her liberal and unre-

served communications, a young man of two-and-twenty was likely to be severely critical on a beautiful girl of eighteen, for not observing a proper distance towards him; on the contrary, I was equally diverted and flattered by Miss Vernon's confidence; and that notwithstanding her declaration that it was conferred on me solely because I was the first auditor who occurred, of intelligence enough to comprehend it. With the presumption of my age, certainly not diminished by my residence in France, I imagined, that well-formed features, and a handsome person, both which I conceived myself to possess, were not unsuitable qualifications for the confident of a young beauty. My vanity thus enlisted in Miss Vernon's behalf, I was far from judging her with severity, merely for a frankness which, I supposed, was in some degree justified by my own personal merit; and the feelings of partiality, which her beauty, and the singularity of her situation, were of themselves calcu-

lated to excite, were enhanced by my opinion of her penetration and judgment in her choice of a friend.

After Miss Vernon quitted the apartment, the bottle circulated, or rather flew around the table in unceasing revolution. My foreign education had given me a distaste to intemperance, then and yet too common a vice among my countrymen. The conversation which seasoned such orgies was as little to my taste, and, if any thing could render it more disgusting, it was the relationship of the company. I therefore seized a lucky opportunity, and made my escape through a side-door, leading I knew not whither, rather than endure any longer the sight of father and sons practising the same degrading intemperance, and holding the same coarse and disgusting conversation. I was pursued, of course, as I had expected, to be reclaimed by force, as a deserter from the shrine of Bacchus. When I heard the whoop and hollo, and the tramp of the heavy boots of my pursuers on the winding stair which I was descending, I

plainly foresaw I should be overtaken unless I could get out into the open air. I therefore threw open a casement in the stair-case, which opened into an old-fashioned garden; and, as the height did not exceed six feet, I jumped out without hesitation, and soon heard, far behind, the "hey whoop! stole away! stole away!" of my baffled pursuers. I ran down one alley, walked fast up another; and then, conceiving myself out of all danger of pursuit, I slackened my pace into a quiet stroll, enjoying the cool air which the heat of the wine I had been obliged to swallow, as well as that of my rapid retreat, rendered doubly grateful.

As I sauntered on, I found the gardener hard at his evening employment, and saluted him, as I paused to look at his work. "Good even, my friend."

"Gude e'en—gude e'en t' ye," answered the man, without looking up, and in a tone which at once indicated his northern extraction.

"Fine weather for your work, my friend."

"It's no that muckle to be complained of," answered the man, with that limited degree of praise which gardeners and farmers usually bestow on the very best weather. Then raising his head, as if to see who spoke to him, he touched his Scotch bonnet with an air of respect, as he observed, "Eh! gude safe us!—it's a sight for sair een, to see a gold-laced jeistiecor in the Ha' garden sae late at e'en."

"A gold-laced what, my good friend?"

"Ou a jeistiecor*—that's a jacket like your ain, there. They hae other things to do wi' them up yonder—unbuttoning them to make room for the beef and the bag-puddings, and the claret-wine, nae doubt—that's the ordinary for evening lecture on this side the Border."

"There's no such plenty of good cheer

* Perhaps from the French *justaucorps.*

in your country, my good friend, as to tempt you to sit so late at it."

" Hout, sir, ye ken little about Scotland; it's no for want of good vivers—the best of fish, flesh, and fool hae we, by sybos, ingans, turneeps, and other garden fruit. But we hae mense and discretion, and are moderate of our mouths; but here, frae the kitchen to the ha', its fill and fetch mair frae the tae end of the four and twenty till the t'other. Even their fast days—they ca' it fasting when they hae the best o' fish frae Hartlepool and Sunderland by land carriage, forbye trouts, gilses, salmon, and a' the lave o't, and so they make their very fasting a kind of luxury and abomination; and then the awfu' masses and matins of the puir deceived souls—but I shouldna speak about them, for your honour will be a Roman, I'se warrant, like the lave."

" Not I, my friend; I was bred an English presbyterian, or a dissenter."

" The right hand of fellowship to your honour, then," quoth the gardener, with as

much alacrity as his hard features were capable of expressing, and, as if to shew that his good will did not rest on words, he plucked forth a huge horn snuff-box, or mull, as he called it, and proffered me a pinch with a most fraternal grin.

Having accepted his courtesy, I asked him if he had been long a domestic at Osbaldistone Hall?

"I have been fighting with wild beasts at Ephesus," said he, looking towards the building, "for the best part of these four and twenty years, as sure as my name's Andrew Fairservice."

"But, my excellent friend, Andrew Fairservice, if your religion and your temperance are so much offended by Roman rituals and southern hospitality, it seems to me that you must have been putting yourself to an unnecessary penance all this while, and that you might have found a service where they eat less, and are more orthodox in their worship. I dare say it cannot be want of skill which prevented

your being placed more to your satisfaction."

"It doesna become me to speak to the point of my qualifications," said Andrew, looking round him with great complacency; "but nae doubt I should understand my trade of horticulture, seeing I was bred in the parish of Dreepdaly, where they raise lang-kale under glass, and force the early nettles for their spring kale.—And, to speak truth, I hae been flitting every term these four and twenty years; but when the time comes, there's aye something to saw that I would like to see sawn,—or something to maw that I would like to see mawn,—or something to ripe that I would like to see ripen,—and sae I e'en daiker on wi' the family frae year's end to year's end. And I wad say for certain, that I am gaun to quit at Cannlemas, only I was just as positive on it twenty years syne, and I find mysel still turning up the mouls here, for a' that. Forbye that, to tell your honour the even down truth, there's nae better

place ever offered to Andrew. But if your honour wad wush me to ony place where I wad hear pure doctrine, and hae a free cow's grass, and a cot, and a yard, and mair than ten punds of annual fee, and where there's nae leddy about the town to count the apples, I'se hold mysel muckle indebted to you."

"Bravo, Andrew; I perceive you'll lose no preferment for want of asking patronage."

"I canna see what for I should; it's no a generation to wait till ane's worth's discovered, I trow."

"But you are no friend, I observe, to the ladies."

"Na, by my troth, I keep up the first gardener's quarrel to them. They're fasheous bargains—aye crying for apricocks, pears, plums, and apples, summer and winter, without distinction o' seasons; but we hae nae slices o' the spare rib here, be praised for't! except auld Martha, and she's weel aneugh pleased wi' the freedom o' the ber-

ry-bushes to her sister's weans, when they come to drink tea in a holiday in the housekeeper's room, and wi' a wheen codlings now and then for her ain private supper."

"You forget your young mistress."

"What mistress do I forget?—whae's that?"

"Your young mistress, Miss Vernon."

"What! the lassie Vernon—She's nae mistress o' mine, man. I wish she was her ain mistress; and I wish she mayna be some other body's mistress or its lang—She's a wild slip that."

"Indeed!" said I, more interested than I cared to own to myself, or to show to this fellow—"why, Andrew, you know all the secrets of this family."

"If I ken them, I can keep them," said Andrew; "they winna work in my wame like barm in a barrel, I'se warrant ye. Miss Die is—but its neither beef nor brose o' mine."

And he began to dig with a great semblance of assiduity.

"What is Miss Vernon, Andrew? I am a friend of the family, and should like to know."

"Other than a gude ane, I'm fearing," said Andrew, closing one eye hard, and shaking his head with a grave and mysterious look—"something glee'd—your honour understands me."

"I cannot say I do," said I, "Andrew; but I should like to hear you explain yourself;" and therewithal I slipped a crown-piece into Andrew's horn-hard hand. The touch of the silver made him grin a ghastly smile, as he nodded slowly, and thrust it into his breeches pocket; and then, like a man who well understood that there was value to be returned, stood up, and rested his arms on his spade, with his features composed into the most important gravity, as for some serious communication. "Ye maun ken, then, young gentleman, since it

imports you to know, that Miss Vernon is—"

Here breaking off, he sucked in both his cheeks, till his lanthorn jaws and long chin assumed the appearance of a pair of nut-crackers; winked hard once more, frowned, shook his head, and seemed to think his physiognomy had completed the information which his tongue had not fully told.

"Good God!" said I, "so young, so beautiful, so early lost!"

"Troth, ye may say sae—she's in a manner lost, body and saul; forbye being a papist, I'se uphaud her for"—and his northern caution prevailed, and he was again silent.

"For what, sir?" said I, sternly. "I insist on knowing the plain meaning of all this."

"Ou, just for the bitterest jacobite in the haill shire."

"Phaw! a jacobite?—is that all?"

Andrew looked at me with some astonishment, at hearing his information treat-

ed so lightly; and then muttering, "It's the warst thing I ken aboot the lassie, howsoe'er," he resumed his spade, like the King of the Vandals, in Marmontel's late novel.

CHAPTER VII.

Bardolph. The sheriff, with a monstrous watch, is at the door.
Henry IV. First Part.

I FOUND out with some difficulty the apartment which was destined for my accommodation; and, having secured myself the necessary good-will and attention from my uncle's domestics, by using the means they were most capable of comprehending, I secluded myself there for the remainder of the evening, conjecturing, from the fair way in which I had left my new relatives, as well as from the distant noise which continued to echo from the stone-hall, (as their banquetting room was called,) that they were not likely to be fitting company for a sober man.

What could my father mean by sending

me to be an inmate in this strange family? was my first and most natural reflection. My uncle, it was plain, received me as one who was to make some stay with him, and his rude hospitality rendered him as indifferent as King Hal to the number of those who fed upon his cost. But it was plain my presence or absence would be of as little importance in his eyes as that of one of his blue-coated serving-men. My cousins were mere cubs, in whose company I might, if I liked it, unlearn whatever decent manners, or elegant accomplishments I had acquired, but where I could attain no information beyond what regarded worming dogs, rowelling horses, and following foxes. I could only imagine one reason, which was probably the true one. My father considered the life which was led at Osbaldistone Hall as the natural and inevitable pursuits of all country gentlemen, and he was desirous, by giving me an opportunity of seeing that with which he knew I would be disgusted, to reconcile me, if

possible, to take an active share in his own business. In the meantime, he would take Rashleigh Osbaldistone into the counting-house. But he had an hundred modes of providing for him, and that advantageously, whenever he chose to get rid of him. So that, although I did feel a certain qualm of conscience at having been the means of introducing Rashleigh, being such as he was described by Miss Vernon, into my father's business—perhaps into his confidence—I subdued it by the reflection, that my father was complete master of his own affairs—a man not to be imposed upon, or influenced by any one, and that all I knew to the young gentleman's prejudice was through the medium of a singular and giddy girl, whose communications were made with an injudicious frankness, which might warrant me in supposing her conclusions had been hastily or inaccurately formed. Then my mind naturally turned to Miss Vernon herself; her extreme beauty; her very peculiar situation, relying solely upon her re-

flections, and her own spirit, for guidance and protection; and her whole character offering that variety and spirit which piques our curiosity, and engages our attention in spite of ourselves. I had sense enough to consider the neighbourhood of this singular young lady, and the chance of our being thrown into very close and frequent intercourse, as adding to the dangers, while it relieved the dulness, of Osbaldistone Hall; but I could not, with the fullest exertion of my prudence, prevail upon myself to regret excessively this new and particular hazard to which I was to be exposed. This scruple I also settled as young men settle most difficulties of the kind—I would be very cautious, always on my guard, consider Miss Vernon rather as a companion than an intimate, and all would do well enough. With these reflections I fell asleep, Miss Vernon, of course, forming the last subject of my contemplation.

Whether I dreamed of her or not, I cannot satisfy you, for I was tired and slept

soundly. But she was the first person I thought of in the morning, when waked at dawn by the cheerful notes of the hunting-horn. To start up, and direct my horse to be saddled, was my first movement; and in a few minutes I was in the court-yard, where men, dogs, and horses, were in full preparation. My uncle, who, perhaps, was not entitled to expect a very alert sportsman in his nephew, bred as he was in foreign parts, seemed rather surprised to see me, and I thought his morning salutation wanted something of the hearty and hospitable tone which distinguished his first welcome. "Art there, lad?—aye, youth's aye rathe—but look to thysel—mind the old song, lad—

> "He that gallops his horse on Blackstone edge
> May chance to catch a fall."

I believe there are few young men, and those very sturdy moralists, who would not rather be taxed with some moral peccadillo

than with want of knowledge in horseman-ship. As I was by no means deficient either in skill or courage, I resented my uncle's insinuation accordingly, and assured him he would find me up with the hounds.

"I doubt na, lad," was his reply; "thou'rt a rank rider, I'se warrant thee—but take heed. Thy father sent thee here to me to be bitted, and I doubt I must ride thee on the curb, or we'll hae some one to ride thee on the halter, if I take na the better heed."

As this speech was totally unintelligible to me; as, besides, it did not seem to be delivered for my use or benefit, but was spoken as it were aside, and as if expressing aloud something which was passing through the mind of my much honoured uncle, I concluded it must either refer to my desertion of the bottle on the preceding evening, or that my uncle's morning hours being a little discomposed by the revels of the night before, his temper had suffered in proportion. I only made the passing re-

flection, that if he played the ungracious landlord, I would remain the shorter while his guest, and then hastened to salute Miss Vernon, who advanced cordially to meet me. Some show of greeting also passed between my cousins and me; but as I saw them maliciously bent upon criticizing my dress and accoutrements, from the cap to the stirrup-irons, and sneering at whatever had a new or foreign appearance, I exempted myself from the task of paying them much attention; and assuming, in requital of their grins and whispers, an air of the utmost indifference and contempt, I attached myself to Miss Vernon as the only person in the party whom I could regard as a suitable companion. By her side, therefore, we sallied forth to the destined cover, which was a dingle or copse on the side of an extensive common. As we rode thither, I observed to Diana, that I did not see my cousin Rashleigh in the field; to which she replied,—" O no—he's a mighty hunter,

but it's after the fashion of Nimrod, and his game is man."

The dogs now brushed into the cover, with the appropriate encouragement from the hunters—all was business, bustle, and activity. My cousins were soon too much interested in the business of the morning to take any farther notice of me, unless that I overheard Dickon the horse-jockey whisper to Wilfred the fool—"Look thou, an our French cousin be nat off a' first burst."

To which Wilfred answered, "Like enow, for he has a queer outlandish binding on's castor."

Thorncliff, however, who, in his rude way, seemed not absolutely insensible to the beauty of his kinswoman, appeared determined to keep us company more closely than his brothers, perhaps to watch what passed betwixt Miss Vernon and me—perhaps to enjoy my expected mishaps in the chase. In the last particular he was disappointed. A fox was found, when, notwith-

standing the ill-omened French binding upon my hat, I sustained my character as a horseman to the admiration of my uncle and Miss Vernon, and the secret disappointment of those who expected me to disgrace it. Reynard, however, after a hard burst of several miles, proved too wily for his pursuers, and the hounds were at fault. I could at this time observe in Miss Vernon's manner an impatience of the close attendance which we received from Thorncliff Osbaldistone; and, as that active-spirited young lady never hesitated at taking the readiest means to gratify any wish of the moment, she said to him, in a tone of reproach—" I wonder, Thornie, what keeps you dangling at my horse's crupper all this morning, when you know the earths above Woolverton-mill are not stopt."

" I know no such an thing then, Miss Die, for the miller swore himsel as black as night, that he stopt them at twelve o'clock, midnight that was."

" O fie upon you, Thornie, would you

trust to a miller's word?—and these earths, too, when we lost the fox three times this season, and you on your grey mare that can gallop there and back in ten minutes!"

"Well, Miss Die, I'se go to Woolverton then, and if the earths are not stopped, I'se raddle Dick the miller's bones for him."

"Do, my dear Thornie; horsewhip the rascal to purpose—via—fly away, and about it."—Thorncliff went off at the gallop—"or get horsewhipped yourself, which will serve my purpose just as well.—I must teach them all discipline and obedience to the word of command. I am raising a regiment, you must know. Thornie shall be my serjeant-major, Dickon my riding-master, and Wilfred, with his deep dub-a-dub tones, that speak but three syllables at a time, my kettle-drummer."

"And Rashleigh?"

"Rashleigh shall be my scout-master."

"And will you find no employment for me, most lovely colonel?"

"You shall have the choice of being pay-

master, or plunder-master, to the corps. But see how the dogs puzzle about there. Come, Mr Frank, the scent's cold; they wont recover it there this while; follow me, I have a view to show you."

And, in fact, she cantered up to the top of a gentle hill, commanding an extensive prospect. Casting her eyes around, to see that no one was near us, she drew up her horse beneath a few birch trees, which screened us from the rest of the hunting field—"Do you see yon peaked, brown, heathy hill, having something like a whitish speck upon the side?"

"Terminating that long ridge of broken moorish uplands?—I see it distinctly."

"That whitish speck is a rock called Hawkesmore-crag, and Hawkesmore-crag is in Scotland."

"Indeed! I did not think we had been so near Scotland."

"It is so, I assure you, and your horse will carry you there in two hours."

"I shall hardly give him the trouble; why, the distance must be eighteen miles as the crow flies."

"You may have my mare, if you think her less blown—I say, that in two hours you may be in Scotland."

"And I say, that I have so little desire to be there, that if my horse's head were over the Border, I would not give his tail the trouble of following. What should I do in Scotland?"

"Provide for your safety, if I must speak plainly. Do you understand me now, Mr Frank?"

"Not a whit; you are more and more oracular."

"Then, on my word, you either mistrust me most unjustly, and are a better dissembler than Rashleigh Osbaldistone himself, or you know nothing of what is imputed to you; and then no wonder you stare at me in that grave manner, which I can scarce see without laughing."

"Upon my word of honour, Miss Vernon," said I, with an impatient feeling of her childish disposition to mirth, "I have not the most distant conception of what you mean. I am happy to afford you any subject of amusement, but I am quite ignorant in what it consists."

"Nay, there's no sound jest after all," said the young lady, composing herself, "only one looks so very ridiculous when he is fairly perplexed; but the matter is serious enough. Do you know one Moray, or Morris, or some such name?"

"Not that I can at present recollect."

"Think a moment—Did you not lately travel with somebody of such a name?"

"The only man with whom I travelled for any length of time, was a fellow whose soul seemed to lie in his portmanteau."

"Then it was like the soul of the licentiate Pedro Garcias, which lay among the ducats in his leathern purse. That man has been robbed, and he has lodged an information

against you, as connected with the violence done to him."

"You jest, Miss Vernon!"

"I do not, I assure you—the thing is an absolute fact."

"And do you," said I, with strong indignation, which I did not attempt to suppress, "do you suppose me capable of meriting such a charge?"

"You would call me out for it, I suppose, had I the advantage of being a man—You may do so as it is, if you like it—I can shoot flying, as well as leap a five-barred gate."

"And are colonel of a regiment of horse besides," replied I, reflecting how idle it was to be angry with her—"But do explain the present jest to me!"

"There's no jest whatever," said Diana; "you are accused of robbing this man, and my uncle believes it as well as I did."

"Upon my honour, I am greatly obliged to my friends for their good opinion."

"Now do not, if you can help it, snort, and stare, and snuff the wind, and look so

exceedingly like a startled horse—There's no such offence as you suppose—you are not charged with any petty larceny, or vulgar felony—by no means. This fellow was carrying money from government, both specie and bills, to pay the troops in the north; and it is said he has been also robbed of some dispatches of great consequence."

"And so it is high treason, then, and not simple robbery, of which I am accused?"

"Certainly; which, you know, has been in all ages accounted the crime of a gentleman. You will find plenty in this country, and one not far from your elbow, who think it a merit to distress the Hanoverian government by every means possible."

"Neither my politics nor my morals, Miss Vernon, are of a description so accommodating."

"I really begin to believe that you are a presbyterian and Hanoverian in good earnest. But what do you propose to do?"

"Instantly to refute this atrocious calumny. Before whom," I asked, "was this extraordinary accusation laid?"

"Before old Squire Inglewood, who had sufficient unwillingness to receive it. He sent tidings to my uncle, I suppose, that he might smuggle you away into Scotland, out of reach of the warrant. But my uncle is sensible that his religion and old predilections render him obnoxious to government, and that, were he caught playing booty, he would be disarmed, and probably dismounted, (which would be the worse evil of the two,) as a jacobite, papist, and suspected person."

"I can conceive that, sooner than lose his hunters, he would give up his nephew."

"His nephew, nieces, sons—daughters, if he had them, and whole generation," said Diana; "therefore trust not to him, even for a single moment, but make the best of your way before they can serve the warrant."

"That I shall certainly do; but it shall be to the house of this Squire Inglewood—which way does it lie?"

"About five miles off, in the low ground, behind yonder plantations—you may see the tower of the clock-house."

"I will be there in a few minutes," said I, putting my horse in motion.

"And I will go with you, and show you the way," said Diana, putting her palfrey also to the trot.

"Do not think of it, Miss Vernon; it is not—permit me the freedom of a friend—it is not proper, scarcely even delicate, in you to go with me upon such an errand as I am now upon."

"I understand your meaning," said Miss Vernon, a slight blush crossing her haughty brow;—"it is plainly spoken,"—and after a moment's pause she added, "and I believe kindly meant."

"It is indeed, Miss Vernon; can you think me insensible of the interest you show

me, or ungrateful for it?" said I, with even more interest than I could have wished to express. "Your's is meant for true kindness, shewn best at the hour of need. But I must not, for your own sake—for the chance of misconstruction—suffer you to pursue the dictates of your generosity; this is so public an occasion—it is almost like venturing into an open court of justice."

"And if it were not almost, but altogether entering into an open court of justice, do you think I would not go there if I thought it right, and wished to protect a friend? You have no one to stand by you—you are a stranger; and here, in the outskirts of the kingdom, country justices do odd things. My uncle has no desire to embroil himself in your affair;—Rashleigh is absent, and were he here, there is no knowing which side he might take; the rest are all more stupid and brutal one than another. I will go with you, and I do not

fear being able to serve you. I am no fine lady, to be terrified to death with law books, hard words, or big wigs."

"But, my dear Miss Vernon—"

"But, my dear Mr Francis, be patient and quiet, and let me take my own way; for when I take the bit between my teeth, there is no bridle will stop me."

Flattered with the interest so lovely a creature seemed to take in my fate, yet vexed at the ridiculous appearance I should make, by carrying a girl of eighteen along with me as an advocate, and seriously concerned for the misconstruction to which her motives might be exposed, I endeavoured to combat her resolution to accompany me to Squire Inglewood's. The self-will'd girl told me roundly, that my dissuasions were absolutely in vain; that she was a true Vernon, whom no consideration, not even that of being able to do but little to assist him, should induce to abandon a friend in distress; and that all I could say on the subject might be very well for pret-

ty, well-educated, well-behaved misses from a town boarding-school, but did not apply to her, who was accustomed to mind nobody's opinion but her own.

While she spoke thus, we were advancing hastily towards Inglewood-Place, while, as if to divert me from the task of farther remonstrance, she drew a ludicrous picture of the magistrate and his clerk. Inglewood was, according to her description, a white-washed jacobite, that is, one who, having been long a non-juror, like most of the other gentlemen of the country, had lately qualified himself to act as a justice, by taking the oaths to government. "He had done so," she said, "in compliance with the urgent request of most of his brother squires, who saw, with regret, that the palladium of sylvan sport, the game-laws, were likely to fall into disuse for want of a magistrate who would enforce them; the nearest acting justice being the Mayor of Newcastle, and he, as being rather inclined to the consumption of the game when properly dress-

ed, than to its preservation when alive, was more partial, of course, to the cause of the poacher than of the sportsman. Resolving, therefore, that it was expedient some one of their number should sacrifice the scruples of jacobitical loyalty to the good of the community, the Northumbrian country gentlemen imposed the duty on Inglewood, who, being very inert in most of his feelings and sentiments, might, they thought, comply with any political creed without much repugnance. Having thus procured the body of justice, they proceeded," continued Miss Vernon, " to attach to it a clerk, by way of soul, to direct and animate its movements. Accordingly, they got a sharp Newcastle attorney, called Jobson, who, to vary my metaphor, finds it a good thing enough to retail justice at the sign of Squire Inglewood, and, as his own emoluments depend on the quantity of business which he transacts, he hooks in his principal for a great deal more employment in the justice line than the honest squire had ever

bargained for; so that no apple-wife within the circuit of ten miles can settle her account with a coster-monger without an audience of the reluctant Justice and his alert clerk, Mr Joseph Jobson. But the most ridiculous scenes occur when affairs come before him, like our business of to-day, having any colouring of politics. Mr Joseph Jobson (for which, no doubt, he has his own very sufficient reasons,) is a prodigious zealot for the protestant religion, and a great friend to the present establishment in church and state. Now, his principal, retaining a sort of instinctive attachment to the opinions which he professed openly, until he relaxed his political creed, with the patriotic view of enforcing the law against unauthorized destroyers of black-game, grouse, partridges, and hares, is peculiarly embarrassed when the zeal of his assistant involves him in judicial proceedings connected with his earlier faith; and, instead of seconding his zeal, he seldom fails to oppose to it a double dose of indo-

lence and lack of exertion. And this inactivity does not by any means arise from actual stupidity. On the contrary, for one whose principal delight is in eating and drinking, he is an alert, joyous, and lively old soul, which makes his assumed dulness the more diverting. So you may see Jobson on such occasions, like a bit of a broken-down blood tit condemned to drag an overloaded cart, puffing, strutting, and spluttering, to get the justice put in motion, while, though the wheels groan, creak, and revolve slowly, the great and preponderating weight of the vehicle fairly frustrates the efforts of the willing quadruped, and prevents its being brought into a state of actual progression. Nay more, the unfortunate poney, I understand, has been heard to complain, that this same car of justice, which he finds it so hard to put in motion on some occasions, can on others run fast enough down hill of its own accord, dragging his reluctant self backwards along with it, when any thing can be done of service to Squire

Inglewood's quondam friends. And then Mr Jobson talks big about reporting his principal to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if it were not for his particular regard and friendship for Mr Inglewood and his family."

As Miss Vernon concluded this whimsical description, we found ourselves in front of Inglewood-Place, a handsome, though old-fashioned building, which shewed the consequence of the family.

CHAPTER VIII.

> "Sir," quoth the Lawyer, "not to flatter ye,
> You have as good and fair a battery
> As heart could wish, and need not shame
> The proudest man alive to claim."
>
> BUTLER.

OUR horses were taken by a servant in Sir Hildebrand's livery, whom we found in the court-yard, and we entered the house. In the entrance hall I was somewhat surprised, and my fair companion still more so, when we met Rashleigh Osbaldistone, who could not help shewing equal wonder at our rencontre.

"Rashleigh," said Miss Vernon, without giving him time to ask any question, "you have heard of Mr Francis Osbaldistone's affair, and you have been talking to the justice about it?"

"Certainly," said Rashleigh composedly,

"it has been my business here. I have been endeavouring," he said, with a bow to me, "to render my cousin what service I can. But I am sorry to meet him here."

"As a friend and relation, Mr Osbaldistone, you ought to have been sorry to have met me any where else, at a time when the charge of my reputation required me to be on this spot as soon as possible."

"True; but, judging from what my father said, I should have supposed a short retreat into Scotland—just till matters should be smoothed over in a quiet way—"

I answered with warmth, "That I had no prudential measures to observe, and desired to have nothing smoothed over; on the contrary, I was come to enquire into a rascally calumny, which I was determined to probe to the bottom."

"Mr Francis Osbaldistone is an innocent man, Rashleigh, and he demands an investigation of the charge against him, and I intend to support him in it."

"You do, my pretty cousin?—I should

think, now, Mr Francis Osbaldistone was likely to be as effectually, and rather more delicately, supported by my presence than by yours."

"O certainly; but two heads are better than one, you know."

"Especially such a head as yours, my pretty Die," advancing, and taking her hand with a familiar fondness, which made me think him fifty times uglier than nature had made him. She led him, however, a few steps aside; they conversed in an under voice, and she appeared to insist upon some request which he was unwilling, or unable to comply with. I never saw so strong a contrast betwixt the expression of two faces. Miss Vernon's from being earnest became angry. Her eyes and cheeks became more animated, her colour mounted, she clenched her little hand, and, stamping on the ground with her foot, seemed to listen with a mixture of contempt and indignation to the apologies, which, from his look of civil deference, his composed and

respectful smile, his body rather drawing back than advanced, and other signs of look and person, I concluded him to be pouring out at her feet. At length she flung away from him, with "I *will* have it so."

"It is not in my power—there is no possibility of it.—Would you think it, Mr Osbaldistone?" said he, addressing me——

"You are not mad?" said she, interrupting him.

"Would you think it?" said he, without attending to her hint—"Miss Vernon insists, not only that I know your innocence, (of which, indeed, it is impossible for any one to be more convinced) but that I must also be acquainted with the real perpetrators of the outrage on this fellow—if, indeed, such an outrage has been committed. Is this reasonable, Mr Osbaldistone?"

"I will not allow any appeal to Mr Osbaldistone, Rashleigh," said the young lady; "he does not know, as I do, the incredible extent and accuracy of your information on all points."

"As I am a gentleman, you do me more honour than I deserve."

"Justice, Rashleigh—only justice—and it is only justice which I expect at your hands."

"You are a tyrant, Diana," he answered, with a sort of sigh—"a capricious tyrant, and rule your friends with a rod of iron. Still, however, it shall be as you desire. But you ought not to be here—you know you ought not—you must return with me."

Then turning from Diana, who seemed to stand undecided, he came up to me in the most friendly manner, and said, "Do not doubt my interest in what regards you, Mr Osbaldistone. If I leave you just at this moment, it is only to act for your advantage. But you must use your influence with your cousin to return; her presence cannot serve you, and must prejudice herself."

"I assure you, sir," I replied, "you

cannot be more convinced of this than I; I have urged Miss Vernon's return as anxiously as she would permit me to do."

"I have thought on it," said Miss Vernon, after a pause, "and I will not go till I see you safe out of the hands of the Philistines. Cousin Rashleigh, I dare say, means well; but he and I know each other well.—Rashleigh, I will NOT go;—I know," she added in a more soothing tone, "my being here will give you more motive for speed and exertion."

"Stay, then, rash, obstinate girl," said Rashleigh; "you know but too well to whom you trust;" and hastening out of the hall, we heard his horse's feet a minute afterwards in rapid motion.

"Thank Heaven, he is gone!" said Diana. "And now, let us seek out the justice."

"Had we not better call a servant?"

"O, by no means; I know the way to

his den—we must burst on him suddenly—follow me."

I did follow her accordingly, as she tripped up a few gloomy steps, traversed a twilight passage, and entered a sort of antiroom, hung round with old maps, architectural elevations, and genealogical trees. A pair of folding doors opened from this into Mr Inglewood's sitting apartment, from which was heard the fag-end of an old ditty, chaunted by a voice which had been in its day fit for a jolly bottle song.

> " O, in Skipton-in-Craven,
> Is never a haven,
> But many a day foul weather ;
> And he that would say
> A pretty girl nay,
> I wish for his cravat a tether."—

" Hey day !" said Miss Vernon, " the genial justice must have dined already,—I did not think it had been so late."

It was even so. Mr Inglewood's appetite having been sharpened by his official

investigations, he had ante-dated his meridian repast, having dined at twelve instead of one o'clock, then the general dining-hour in England. The various occurrences of the morning occasioned our arriving some time after this hour, to the justice the most important of the four-and-twenty, and he had not neglected the interval. "Stay you here," said Diana; "I know the house, and I will call a servant; your sudden appearance might startle the old gentleman even to choking;" and she escaped from me, leaving me uncertain whether I ought to advance or retreat. It was impossible for me not to hear some part of what past within the dinner apartment, and particularly several apologies for declining to sing, expressed in a dejected croaking voice, the tones of which I conceived were not entirely new to me. "Not sing, sir? by our lady! but you must—What! you have cracked my silver-mounted cocoa-nut of sack, and tell me that you cannot sing!—Sir, sack will make a cat speak and sing too; so up with

a merry stave, or trundle yourself out of my doors—Do you think you are to take up all my valuable time with your d—d declarations, and then tell me you cannot sing?"

"Your worship is perfectly in rule," said another voice, which, from its pert conceited accent, might be that of the clerk, "and the party must be conformable; he hath *canet* written on his face in court hand."

"Up with it, then," said the justice, "or, by St Christopher, you shall crack the cocoa-nut full of salt and water, according to the statute for such effect made and provided."

Thus exhorted and threatened, my quondam fellow-traveller, for I could no longer doubt that he was the recusant in question, uplifted, with a voice similar to that of a criminal singing his last psalm on the scaffold, a most doleful stave to the following effect:

"Good people all, I pray give ear,
A woful story you shall hear,

'Tis of a robber as stout as ever
Bade a true man stand and deliver.
With his foodle doo fa loodle loo.

" This knave, most worthy of a cord,
Being arm'd with pistol and with sword,
'Twixt Kensington and Brentford then
Did boldly stop six honest men.
With his foodle doo, &c.

" These honest men did at Brentford dine,
Having drank each man his pint of wine,
When this bold thief, with many curses,
Did say, You dogs, your lives or purses.
With his foodle doo," &c.

I question if the honest men, whose misfortune is commemorated in this pathetic ditty, were more startled at the appearance of the bold thief, than the songster was at mine; for, tired of waiting for some one to announce me, and finding my situation as a listener rather awkward, I presented myself to the company just as my friend Mr Morris, for such, it seems, was his name, was uplifting the fifth stave of his doleful

ballad. The high note, with which the tune started, died away in a quaver of consternation upon finding himself so near one whose character he supposed to be little less suspicious than that of the hero of his madrigal, and he remained silent, with a mouth gaping as if I had brought the Gorgon's head in my hand.

The justice, whose eyes had closed under the influence of the somniferous lullaby of the song, started up in his chair as it suddenly ceased, and stared with wonder at the unexpected addition which the company had received, while his organs of sight were in abeyance. The clerk, as I conjectured him to be from his appearance, was also commoved, for, sitting opposite to Mr Morris, that honest gentleman's terror communicated itself to him, though he wotted not why.

I broke the silence of surprise occasioned by my abrupt entrance. "My name, Mr Inglewood, is Francis Osbaldistone; I understand that some scoundrel has brought

a complaint before you, charging me with being concerned in a loss which he says he has sustained."

"Sir," said the justice, somewhat peevishly, "these are matters I never enter upon after dinner—there is a time for every thing, and a justice of peace must eat as well as other folks."

The goodly person of Mr Inglewood, by the way, seemed by no means to have suffered by any fasts, whether in the service of the law or of religion.

"I beg pardon for an ill-timed visit, sir; but as my reputation is concerned, and as the dinner appears to be concluded—"

"It is not concluded, sir," replied the magistrate; "man requires digestion as well as food, and I protest I cannot have benefit from my victuals, unless I am allowed two hours of quiet leisure, intermixed with harmless mirth, and a moderate circulation of the bottle."

"If your honour will forgive me," said Mr Jobson, who had produced and arran-

ged his writing implements in the brief space that our conversation afforded; "as this is a case of felony, and the gentleman seems something impatient, the charge is *contra pacem domini regis*"—

"D—n *dominie regis!*" said the impatient justice—"I hope it's no treason to say so;—but it's enough to make one mad to be worried in this way—have I a moment of my life quiet, for warrants, orders, directions, acts, bails, bonds, and recognizances?—I pronounce to you, Mr Jobson, that I shall send you and the justice-ship to the devil one of these days."

"Your honour will consider the dignity of the office—one of the quorum and custos rotulorum, an office of which Sir Edward Coke wisely saith, The whole christian world hath not the like of it, so it be duly executed."

"Well," said the justice, partly reconciled by this eulogium on the dignity of his situation, and gulping down the rest of his

dissatisfaction in a huge bumper of claret, "let us to this gear then, and get rid of it as fast as we can.—Here you, sir—you, Morris—you, knight of the sorrowful countenance—is this Mr Francis Osbaldistone the gentleman whom you charge with being art and part of felony?"

"I, sir?" replied Morris, whose scattered wits had hardly yet re-assembled themselves—"I charge nothing—I say nothing against the gentleman."

"Then we dismiss your complaint, sir, that's all, and a good riddance—Push about the bottle—Mr Osbaldistone, help yourself."

Jobson, however, was determined that Morris should not back out of the scrape so easily. "What do you mean, Mr Morris? —Here is your own declaration—the ink scarce dried—and you would retract it in this scandalous manner!"

"How do I know," whispered the other, in a tremulous tone, "how many rogues are in the house to back him—I have read

of such things in Johnson's Lives of the Highwaymen.—I protest the door opens"—

And it did open, and Diana Vernon entered—"You keep fine order here, justice—not a servant to be seen or heard of."

"Ah!" said the justice, starting up with an alacrity which shewed that he was not so engrossed by his devotions to Themis, or Comus, to forget what was due to beauty—"Ah, ha! Die Vernon, the heath-bell of Cheviot, and the blossom of the Border, come to see how the old bachelor keeps house—Art welcome, girl, as flowers in May."

"A fine open, hospitable house you do keep, justice, that must be allowed—not a soul to answer a visitor."

"Ah! the knaves, they reckoned themselves secure of me for a couple of hours—But why did you not come earlier?—Your cousin Rashleigh dined here, and ran away like a poltroon after the first bottle was out—But you have not dined—we'll have some-

thing nice and lady-like—sweet and pretty, like yourself, tossed up in a trice."

"I can't stay, justice—I came with my cousin, Frank Osbaldistone, there, and I must shew him the way back again to the Hall, or he'll lose himself in the wolds."

"Whew! sits the wind in that quarter?" answered the justice,

> "She showed him the way, and she showed him
> the way,
> She showed him the way to woo."

"What! no luck for old fellows, then, my sweet bud of the wilderness?"

"None whatever, Squire Inglewood; but if you will be a good kind justice, and dispatch young Frank's business, and let us canter home again, I'll bring my uncle to dine with you next week, and we'll expect merry doings."

"And you shall find them, my pearl of the Tyne—Zookers, lass, I never envy these

young fellows their rides and scampers, unless when you come across me. But I must not keep you just now, I suppose?—I am quite satisfied with Mr Francis Osbaldistone's explanation—here has been some mistake, which can be cleared at greater leisure."

"Pardon me, sir," said I, "but I have not heard the nature of the accusation yet."

"Yes, sir," said the clerk, who, at the appearance of Miss Vernon, had given up the matter in despair, but who picked up courage to press farther investigation, on finding himself supported from a quarter whence assuredly he expected no backing—"Yes, sir, and Dalton saith, That he who is apprehended as a felon shall not be discharged upon any man's discretion, but shall be held either to bail or commitment, paying to the clerk of the peace the usual fees for recognisance or commitment."

The justice, thus goaded on, gave me at length a few words of explanation.

It seems the tricks which I had played to

this man, Morris, had made a strong impression on his imagination; for I found they had been arrayed against me in his evidence, with all the exaggeration which a timorous and heated imagination could suggest. It appeared also, that, on the day he parted from me, he had been stopped on a solitary spot, and eased of his beloved travelling-companion, the portmanteau, by two men, well mounted and armed, having their faces covered with vizards.

One of them, he conceived, had much of my shape and air, and in a whispering conversation which took place betwixt the free-booters, he heard the other apply to him the name of Osbaldistone. The declaration farther set forth, that, upon enquiring into the principles of the family so named, he, the said declarant, was informed, that they were of the worst description, the family, in all its members, having been papists and jacobites, as he was given to understand by the dissenting clergyman at whose house he stopped after his

rencontre, since the days of William the Conqueror.

Upon all, and each of these weighty reasons, he charged me with being accessory to the felony committed upon his person; he, the said declarant, then travelling in the special employment of government, and having charge of certain important papers, and also a large sum in specie, to be paid over, according to his instructions, to certain persons of official trust and dignity in Scotland.

Having heard this extraordinary accusation, I replied to it, that the circumstances on which it was founded were such as could warrant no justice, or magistrate, in any attempt on my personal liberty. I admitted that I had practised a little upon the terrors of Mr Morris, while we travelled together, but in such trifling particulars as could have excited apprehension in no one who was one whit less timorous and jealous than himself. But I added, that I had never seen him since we parted, and if that which

he feared had really come upon him, I was in no ways accessory to an action so unworthy of my character and station in life. That one of the robbers was called Osbaldistone, or that such a name was mentioned in the course of the conversation betwixt them, was a trifling circumstance, to which no weight was due. And concerning the disaffection alledged against me, I was willing to prove, to the satisfaction of the justice, the clerk, and even the witness himself, that I was of the same persuasion as his friend the dissenting clergyman; had been educated as a good subject upon the principles of the Revolution, and as such now demanded the personal protection of the laws which had been assured by that great event.

The justice fidgetted, took snuff, and seemed considerably embarrassed, while Mr Attorney Jobson, with all the volubility of his profession, ran over the statute of the 34. Edward III., by which justices of the peace are allowed to arrest all those whom they find by indictment or suspicion, and to

put them into prison. The rogue even turned my own admissions against me, alleging, "that since I had confessedly, upon my own shewing, assumed the bearing or deportment of a robber or malefactor, I had voluntarily subjected myself to the suspicions of which I complained, and brought myself within the compass of the act, having wilfully clothed my conduct with all the colour and livery of guilt."

I combatted both his arguments and his jargon with much indignation and scorn, and observed, "that I should, if necessary, produce the bail of my relations, which I conceived could not be refused, without subjecting the magistrate in a misdemeanour."

"Pardon me, my good sir,—pardon me," said the insatiable clerk, "this is a case in which neither bail nor mainprize can be received, the felon who is liable to be committed on heavy grounds of suspicion, not being replevisable under the statute of the 3d of King Edward, there being in that

act, an express exception of such as be charged of commandment, or force, and aid of felony done;" and he hinted, that his worship would do well to remember that such were no way replevisable by common writ, nor without writ.

At this period of the conversation a servant entered, and delivered a letter to Mr Jobson. He had no sooner run it hastily over, than he exclaimed, with the air of one who wished to appear much vexed at the interruption, and felt the consequence attached to a man of multifarious avocations—"Good God!—why, at this rate I shall have neither time to attend to the public concerns nor my own—no rest—no quiet—I wish to Heaven another gentleman in our line would settle here!"

"God forbid!" said the justice, in a tone of *sotto-voce* deprecation; "some of us have enough of one of the tribe."

"This is a matter of life and death, if your worship pleases."

"In God's name! no more justice business, I hope," said the alarmed magistrate.

"No—no," replied Mr Jobson, very consequentially; "old Gaffer Rutledge of Grime's-hill, is subpœna'd for the next world; he has sent an express for Dr Killdown to put in bail—another for me to arrange his worldly affairs."

"Away with you, then," said Mr Inglewood hastily; "his may not be a replevisable case under the statute, you know, or Mr Justice Death may not like the doctor for a *main pernor*, or bailsman."

"And yet," said Jobson, lingering as he moved towards the door, "if my presence here be necessary—I could make out the warrant for committal in a moment, and the constable is below—And you have heard," he said, lowering his voice, "Mr Rashleigh's opinion"—the rest was lost in whisper.

The justice replied aloud, "I tell thee no, man, no—we'll do nought till thou re-

turn, man, 'tis but a four-mile ride—Come, push bottle, Mr Morris—Don't be cast down, Mr Osbaldistone—And you, my rose of the wilderness—one cup of claret to refresh the bloom of your cheeks."

Diana started, as if from a reverie, in which she appeared to have been plunged while we held this discussion. "No, justice, I should be afraid of transferring the bloom to a part of my face where it would show to little advantage. But I will pledge you in a cooler beverage;" and, filling a glass with water, she drank it hastily, while her hurried manner belied her assumed gaiety.

I had not much leisure to make remarks upon her demeanor, however, being full of vexation at the interference of fresh obstacles to an instant examination of the disgraceful and impertinent charge which was brought against me. But there was no moving the justice to take the matter up in absence of his clerk, an incident which

gave him apparently as much pleasure as a holiday to a schoolboy. He persisted in his endeavours to inspire jollity into a company, the individuals of which, whether considered with reference to each other, or to their respective situations, were by no means inclined to mirth. "Come, Master Morris, you're not the first man that's been robbed, I trow—grieving ne'er brought back loss, man.—And you, Mr Frank Osbaldistone, are not the first bully-boy that has said stand to a true man. There was Jack Winterfield, in my young days, kept the best company in the land—at horse-races and cock-fights who but he—hand and glove was I with Jack.—Push bottle, Mr Morris, it's dry talking—Many quart bumpers have I cracked, and thrown many a merry main with poor Jack—good family—ready wit—quick eye—as honest a fellow, barring the deed he died for—we'll drink to his memory, gentlemen—Poor Jack Winterfield—And since we talk of him, and of these sort of

things, and since that d—d clerk of mine has taken his gibberish elsewhere, and since we're snug among ourselves, Mr Osbaldistone, if you will have my best advice, I would take up this matter—the law's hard —very severe—hanged poor Jack Winterfield at York, despite family connections and great interest—all for easing a fat west country grazier of the price of a few beasts —Now, here is honest Mr Morris has been frightened, and so forth—D—n it, man, let the poor fellow have back his portmanteau, and end the frolic at once."

Morris's eyes brightened up at this suggestion, and he began to hesitate forth an assurance that he thirsted for no man's blood, when I cut the proposed accommodation short, by resenting the justice's suggestion as an insult, that went directly to suppose me guilty of the very crime, which I had come to his house with the express intention of disavowing. We were in this awkward predicament, when a servant, opening the door,

announced a "strange gentleman to wait upon his honour;" and the party whom he thus described entered the room without further ceremony.

CHAPTER IX.

One of the thieves come back again! I'll stand close.
He dares not wrong me now, so near the house,
And call in vain 'tis, till I see him offer it.

The Widow.

"A STRANGER!" echoed the justice,—"not upon business, I trust, for I'll be"——

His protestation was cut short by the answer of the man himself. "My business is of a nature somewhat onerous and particular," said my acquaintance Mr Campbell,—for it was he, the very Scotchman whom I had seen at Northallerton,—"and I must solicit your honour to give instant and heedful consideration to it.—I believe, Mr Morris," he added, fixing his eye on that person with a look of peculiar firmness and almost

ferocity—"I believe ye ken brawly what I am—I believe ye cannot have forgotten what passed at our last meeting on the road." Morris's jaw dropped—his countenance became the colour of tallow—his teeth chattered, and he gave visible signs of the utmost consternation. "Take heart of grace, man," said Campbell, "and dinna sit clattering your jaws there like a pair of castanets. I think there can be nae difficulty in your telling Mr Justice, that ye have seen me of yore, and ken me to be a cavalier of fortune, and a man of honour.—Ye ken fu' weel ye will be some time resident in my vicinity, when I may have the power, as I will possess the inclination, to do ye as good a turn."

"Sir—sir—I believe you to be a man of honour, and, as you say, a man of fortune.—Yes, Mr Inglewood," he added, clearing his voice, "I really believe this gentleman to be so."

"And what's this gentleman's commands with me?" said the justice, somewhat pee-

vishly. "One man introduces another, like the rhymes in the 'house that Jack built,' and I get company without either peace or conversation!"

"Both shall be yours, sir," answered Campbell, "in a brief period of time. I come to release your mind from a piece of troublesome duty, not to make increment to it."

"Body o' me! then you are welcome as ever Scot was to England; but get on, man, let's hear what you have got to say at once."

"I presume this gentleman," continued the North Briton, "told you there was a person of the name of Campbell with him, when he had the mischance to lose his valise?"

"He has not mentioned such a name, from beginning to end of the matter," said the justice.

"Ah! I conceive—I conceive," replied Mr Campbell; "ye were kindly afeared of committing a stranger into collision with

the judicial forms of the country; but as I understand my evidence is necessary to the compurgation of ane honest gentleman here, Mr Francis Osbaldistone, wha has been most unjustly suspected, I will dispense with the precaution—Ye will, therefore, please tell Mr Justice Inglewood, whether we did not travel several miles together on the road, in consequence of your own anxious request and suggestion, reiterated ance and again, baith on the evening that we were at Northallerton, and there declined by me, but afterwards accepted, when I overtook ye on the road near Cloberry Allers, and was prevailed on by you to resign my ain intentions of proceeding to Rothbury; and, for my misfortune, to accompany you on your proposed route."

"It's a melancholy truth," answered Morris, holding down his head, as he gave this general assent to the long and leading question which Campbell put to him, and to which he assented with rueful docility.

"And I presume you can also asseverate

to his worship, that no man is better qualified than I am to bear testimony in this case, seeing that I was by you, and near you, constantly during the whole occurrence?"

"No man better qualified, certainly," said Morris, with a deep and embarrassed sigh.

"And why the devil did you not assist him then," said the justice, "since, by Mr Morris's account, there were but two robbers; so you were two to two, and you are both stout likely men?"

"Sir, if it please your worship," said Campbell, "I have been all my life a man of peace and quietness, no ways given to broils or batteries. Mr Morris, who belongs, as I understand, or hath belonged, to his Majesty's army, might have used his pleasure in resistance, he travelling, as I understand, with a great charge of treasure; but for me, who had but my own small peculiar to defend, and who am a man of a pacific occupation, I was unwil-

ling to commit myself to hazard in the matter."

I looked at Campbell as he uttered these words, and never recollect to have seen a more singular contrast than that between the strong daring sternness expressed in his harsh features, and the air of composed meekness and simplicity which his language assumed. There was even a slight ironical smile lurking about the corners of his mouth, which seemed, involuntarily as it were, to intimate his disdain of the quiet and peaceful character which he thought proper to assume, and which led me to entertain strange suspicions that his concern in the violence done to Morris had been something very different from that of a fellow-sufferer, or even of a mere spectator.

Perhaps some such suspicions crossed the Justice's mind at the moment, for he exclaimed, as if by way of ejaculation, "Body o' me! but this is a strange story."

The North Briton seemed to guess at what was passing in his mind; for he went

on, with a change of manner and tone, dismissing from his countenance some part of the hypocritical affectation of humility which had made him obnoxious to suspicion, and saying, with a more frank and unconstrained air, " To say the truth, I am just ane o' these canny folks wha care not to fight, but when they hae gotten something to fight for, which did not chance to be my predicament when I fell in wi' these loons. But, that your worship may know that I am a person of good fame and character, please to cast your eye over that billet."

Mr Inglewood took the paper from his hands, and read half aloud, " These are to certify, that the bearer, Robert Campbell of ——" " Of some place which I cannot pronounce," interjected the justice,—" is a person of good lineage, and peaceable demeanour, travelling towards England on his own proper affairs, &c. &c. &c. Given under our hand, at our Castle of Inver—Invera—rara—ARGYLE."

" A slight testimonial, sir, which I

thought fit to impetrate from that worthy nobleman, (here he raised his hand to his head, as if to touch his hat,) MacCallum-more."

"MacCallum, who, sir?" said the Justice.

"Whom the Southern call the Duke of Argyle."

"I know the Duke of Argyle very well to be a nobleman of great worth and distinction, and a true lover of his country. I was one of those that stood by him in 1714, when he unhorsed the Duke of Marlborough out of his command. I wish we had more noblemen like him. He was an honest Tory in these days, and hand and glove with Ormond. And he has acceded to the present government, as I have done myself, for the peace and quiet of his country; for I cannot presume that great man to have been actuated, as violent folks pretend, with the fear of losing his places and regiment. His testimonial, as you call it, Mr Campbell, is perfectly satisfactory; and

now, what have you got to say to this matter of the robbery?"

"Briefly this, if it please your worship; that Mr Morris might as weel charge it against the babe yet to be born, or against myself even, as against this young gentleman, Mr Osbaldistone; for I am not only free to depone that the person for whom he took him was a shorter man, and a thicker man, but also, for I chanced to obtain a glisk of his visage, as his fause-face slipped aside, that he was a man of other features and complexion than those of this young gentleman, Mr Osbaldistone. And I believe," he added, turning round with a natural, yet somewhat sterner air, to Mr Morris, "that the gentleman will allow I had better opportunity to take cognisance wha were present on that occasion than he, being, I believe, much the cooler o' the twa."

"I agree to it, sir—I agree to it perfectly," said Morris, shrinking back, as Campbell moved his chair towards him to fortify his appeal—"And I incline, sir," he add-

ed, addressing Mr Inglewood, " to retract my information as to Mr Osbaldistone; and I request, sir, you will permit him, sir, to go about his business, and me to go about mine also; your worship may have business to settle with Mr Campbell, and I am rather in haste to be gone."

" Then, there go the declarations," said the Justice, throwing them into the fire— " And now you are at perfect liberty, Mr Osbaldistone—And you, Mr Morris, are set quite at your ease."

" Aye," said Campbell, eyeing Morris as he assented with a rueful grin to the Justice's observations, " much like the ease of a toad under a pair of harrows—But fear nothing, Mr Morris; you and I maun leave the house thegether. I will see you safe—I hope you will not doubt my honour, when I say sae—to the next highway, and then we part company; and if we do not meet as friends in Scotland, it will be your ain fault."

With such a lingering look of terror as

"Thanks, most worshipful," returned Miss Vernon; "but, as matters stand, we must return instantly to Osbaldistone Hall, where they do not know what has become of us, and relieve my uncle of his anxiety on my cousin's account, which is just the same as if one of his own sons were concerned."

"I believe it truly," said the Justice; "for when his eldest son, Archie, came to a bad end, in that unlucky affair of Sir John Fenwick's, Old Hildebrand used to hollow out his name as readily as any of the remaining five, and then complain that he could not recollect which of his sons had been hanged. So, pray hasten home, and relieve his paternal solicitude, since go you must.—But, hark thee hither, heath-blossom," he said, pulling her towards him by the hand, and in a good-humoured tone of admonition, "another time let the law take its course, without putting your pretty finger into her old musty pye, all full of fragments of law-latin—French and dog-latin—And, Die, my beauty, let young fel-

lows shew each other the way through the moors, in case you should lose your own road, while you are pointing out theirs, my pretty Will o' the Wisp."

With this admonition, he saluted and dismissed Miss Vernon, and took an equally kind farewell of me.

"Thou seems to be a good tight lad, Mr Frank, and I remember thy father too —he was my play-fellow at school. Hark thee, lad, ride early at night, and don't swagger with chance passengers on the king's highway. What, man! all the king's liege subjects are not bound to understand joking, and it's ill cracking jests on matters of felony. And here's poor Die Vernon too—a manner alone and deserted on the face of this wide earth, and left to ride, and run, and scamper at her own silly pleasure. Thou must be careful of Die, or egad, I will turn a young fellow again on purpose, and fight thee myself, although I must own it would be a great deal of trouble. And now, get ye both gone, and leave me to my

pipe of tobacco, and my meditations; for what says the song—

> " The Indian leaf doth briefly burn;
> So doth man's strength to weakness turn;—
> The fire of youth extinguish'd quite,
> Comes age, like embers, dry and white.
> Think of this as you take tobacco."

I was much pleased with the gleams of sense and feeling which escaped from the Justice through the vapours of sloth and self-indulgence, assured him of my respect to his admonitions, and took a friendly farewell of the honest magistrate and his hospitable mansion.

We found the same servant of Sir Hildebrand who had taken our horses at our entrance, and who had been directed, as he informed Miss Vernon, by Mr Rashleigh, to wait and attend upon us home. We rode a little way in silence, for, to say truth, my mind was too much bewildered with the events of the morning to permit me to be the first to break it. At length Miss Ver-

non exclaimed, as if giving vent to her own reflections, "Well, Rashleigh is a man to be feared and wondered at, and all but loved; he does whatever he pleases, and makes all others his puppets—has a player ready to perform every part which he imagines, and an invention and readiness which supplies expedients for every emergency."

"You think, then," said I, answering rather to her meaning, than to the express words she made use of, "that this Mr Campbell, whose appearance was so opportune, and who trussed up and carried off my accuser as a falcon trusses a partridge, was an agent of Mr Rashleigh Osbaldistone's?"

"I do guess as much," replied Diana, "and shrewdly suspect, moreover, that he would hardly have appeared so very much in the nick of time, if I had not happened to meet Rashleigh in the hall at the Justice's."

"In that case, my thanks are chiefly due to you, my fair preserver."

"To be sure they are," returned Diana; "and pray, suppose them paid, and accepted with a gracious smile, for I do not care to be troubled with hearing them in good earnest, and am much more likely to yawn than to behave becoming. In short, Mr Frank, I wished to serve you, and I have fortunately been able to do so, and have only one favour to ask in return, and that is, that you will say no more about it.—But who comes here to meet us, 'bloody with spurring, fiery-red with haste?' It is the subordinate man of law, I think, no less than Mr Joseph Jobson."

And Mr Joseph Jobson it proved to be, in great haste, and, as it speedily appeared, in most extreme bad humour. He came up to us, and stopped his horse as we were about to pass, with a slight salutation.

"So, sir—so, Miss Vernon—aye—I see well enough how it is—bail put in during my absence, I suppose—I should like to know who drew the recognizance, that's all. If his worship uses this form of procedure

often, I advise him to get another clerk, that's all, for I shall certainly demit."

"Or suppose he get his present clerk stitched to his sleeve, Mr Jobson," said Diana, "would not that do as well? And pray how does Farmer Rutledge, Mr Jobson, I hope you found him able to sign, seal, and deliver?"

This question seemed greatly to increase the wrath of the man of law. He looked at Miss Vernon with such an air of spite and resentment, as laid me under a strong temptation to knock him off his horse with the butt of my whip, which I only suppressed in consideration of his insignificance.

"Farmer Rutledge, ma'am?" said the clerk, so soon as his indignation permitted him to articulate. "Farmer Rutledge is in as handsome enjoyment of his health as you are—it's all a bam, ma'am—all a bamboozle and a bite that affair of his illness; and if you did not know as much before, you know it now, ma'am."

" La! you there now," replied Miss Vernon, with an affectation of extreme and simple wonder, " sure you don't say so, Mr Jobson?"

" But I *do* say so, ma'am," rejoined the incensed scribe; " and moreover I say, that the old miserly clod-breaker called me pettifogger—pettifogger, ma'am—and said I came to hunt for a job, ma'am—which I have no more right to have said to me than any other gentleman of my profession, ma'am—especially as I am clerk to the peace, having and holding said office under *Trigesimo Septimo Henrij Octavi, and Primo Gulielmi,*—the first of King William, ma'am, of glorious and immortal memory—our immortal deliverer from papists and pretenders, and wooden shoes and warming pans, Miss Vernon."

" Sad things, these wooden shoes and warming pans," retorted the young lady, who seemed to take pleasure in augmenting his wrath;—" and it is a comfort you don't seem to want a warming pan at pre-

sent, Mr Jobson. I am afraid Gaffer Rutledge has not confined his incivility to language—Are you sure he did not give you a beating?"

"Beating, ma'am!—no"—(very shortly) "no man alive shall beat me, I promise you, ma'am."

"That is according as you happen to merit, sir," said I; "for your mode of speaking to this young lady is so unbecoming, that if you do not change your tone, I shall think it worth while to chastise you myself."

"Chastise, sir? and—me, sir?—Do you know whom you speak to, sir?"

"Yes, sir," I replied; "you say yourself you are clerk of peace to the county; and Gaffer Rutledge says you are a pettifogger; and in neither capacity are you entitled to be impertinent to a young lady of fashion."

Miss Vernon laid her hand on my arm, and exclaimed, "Come, Mr Osbaldistone, I will have no assaults and battery on Mr Jobson; I am not in sufficient charity with

him to permit a single touch of your whip,
—why, he would live on it for a term at least. Besides, you have already hurt his feelings sufficiently—you have called him impertinent."

"I don't value his language, Miss," said the clerk, somewhat crest-fallen; "besides, impertinent is not an actionable word; but pettifogger is slander in the highest degree, and that I will make Gaffer Rutledge know to his cost, and all who maliciously repeat the same to the breach of the public peace, and the taking away of my private good name."

"Never mind that, Mr Jobson," said Miss Vernon; "you know, where there is nothing, your own law allows that the king himself must lose his rights; and, for the taking away of your good name, I pity the poor fellow who gets it, and wish you joy of losing it with all my heart."

"Very well, ma'am—good evening, ma'am—I have no more to say—only there are laws against papists, which it would be

well for the land were they better executed. There's third and fourth Edward VI., of antiphoners, missalls, grailes, processionals, manuals, legends, pies, portuasses, and those that have such trinkets in their possession, Miss Vernon—and there's summoning of papists to take the oaths—and there are popish recusant convicts under the first of his present Majesty—aye, and there are penalties for hearing mass. See twenty-third Queen Elizabeth; and third James First, chapter twenty-fifth.—And there are estates to be registered, and deeds and wills to be enrolled, and double taxes to be made, according to the acts in that case made and provided"—

"See the new edition of the Statutes at Large, published under the careful revision of Joseph Jobson, Gent., Clerk of the Peace," said Miss Vernon.

"Also, and above all," continued Jobson, —"for I speak to your warning—you, Diana Vernon, spinstress, not being a femme covert; and being a convict popish recu-

sant, are bound to repair to your own dwelling, and that by the nearest way, under penalty of being held felon to the king—and diligently to seek for passage at common ferries, and to tarry there but one ebb and flood; and unless you can have it in such places, to walk every day into the water up to the knees, assaying to pass over."

"A sort of protestant penance for my catholic errors, I suppose," said Miss Vernon, laughing. "Well, I thank you for the information, Mr Jobson, and will hie me home as fast as I can, and be a better housekeeper in time coming. Good night, my dear Mr Jobson, thou mirror of clerical courtesy."

"Good night, ma'am, and remember the law is not to be trifled with."

And we rode on our separate ways.

"There he goes, for a troublesome mischief-making tool," said Miss Vernon, as she gave a glance after him; "it is hard that persons of birth and rank and estate

should be subjected to the official impertinence of such a paltry pick-thank as that, merely for believing as the whole world believed not much above a hundred years ago—for certainly our Catholic faith has the advantage of antiquity at least."

"I was much tempted to have broken the rascal's head," I replied.

"You would have acted very like a hasty young man," said Miss Vernon; "and yet, had my own hand been an ounce heavier than it is, I think I should have laid its weight upon him.—Well, it does not signify complaining, but there are three things for which I am much to be pitied, if any one thought worth while to waste compassion upon me."

"And what are these three things, Miss Vernon?"

"Will you promise me your deepest sympathy, if I tell you?"

"Certainly;—can you doubt it?" I replied, closing my horse nearer to her's as I spoke, with an expression of interest which I did not attempt to disguise.

" Well, it is very seducing to be pitied after all ; so here are my three grievances —In the first place, I am a girl, and not a young fellow, and would be shut in a mad-house, if I did half the things that I have a mind to ; and that, if I had your happy pre-rogative of acting as you list, would make all the world mad with imitating and ap-plauding me."

" I can't quite afford you the sympathy you expect upon this score," I replied ; " the misfortune is so general, that it be-longs to one half of the species ; and the other half—"

" Are so much better cared for, that they are jealous of their prerogatives," interrupt-ed Miss Vernon ; " I forgot you were a party interested. Nay," said she, as I was going to speak, " that soft smile is intend-ed to be the preface of a very pretty com-pliment respecting the peculiar advantages which Die Vernon's friends and kinsmen enjoy, by her being born one of their He-lots ; but spare me the utterance, my

good friend, and let us try whether we shall agree better on the second count of my indictment against fortune, as that quill-driving puppy would call it. I belong to an oppressed sect and antiquated religion, and, instead of getting credit for my devotion, as is due to all good girls beside, my kind friend, Justice Inglewood, may send me to the house of correction, merely for worshipping God in the way of my ancestors, and say, as old Pembroke did to the Abbess of Wilton, when he usurped her convent and establishment, 'Go spin, you jade,—go spin.'"

"This is not a cureless evil," said I gravely. "Consult some of our learned divines, or consult your own excellent understanding, Miss Vernon; and surely the particulars in which our religious creed differs from that in which you have been educated——"

"Hush!" said Diana, placing her forefinger on her mouth,—"hush! no more of that—forsake the faith of my gallant fa-

thers!—I would as soon, were I man, forsake their banner, when the tide of battle pressed hardest against it, and turn, like a hireling recreant, to join the victorious enemy."

"I honour your spirit, Miss Vernon; and as to the inconveniences to which it exposes you, I can only say, that wounds sustained for the sake of conscience carry their own balsam with the blow."

"Ay; but they are fretful and irritating, for all that. But I see, hard of heart as you are, my chance of beating hemp, or drawing out flax into marvellous coarse thread, affects you as little as my condemnation to coif and pinners, instead of beaver and cockade; so I will spare myself the fruitless pains of telling my third cause of vexation."

"Nay, my dear Miss Vernon, do not withdraw your confidence, and I will promise you, that the three-fold sympathy due to your very unusual causes of distress shall be all duly and truly paid to account of the third, providing you assure me, that it is

one which you neither share with all womankind, nor even with every catholic in England, who, God bless you, are still a sect more numerous than we protestants, in our zeal for church and state, would desire them to be."

"It is, indeed," said Diana, with a manner greatly altered, and more serious than I had yet seen her assume, "a misfortune that well merits compassion. I am by nature, as you may easily observe, of a frank and unreserved disposition—a plain honest girl, who would willingly act openly and honestly by the whole world, and yet fate has involved me in such a series of nets, and toils, and entanglements, that I dare hardly speak a word for fear of consequences—not to myself, but to others."

"That is indeed a misfortune, Miss Vernon, which I do most sincerely compassionate, but which I should hardly have anticipated."

"O, Mr Osbaldistone, if you but knew—if any one knew, what difficulty I some-

times find in hiding an aching heart with a smooth brow, you would indeed pity me —I do wrong, perhaps, in speaking to you even thus far on my own situation. But you are a man of sense and penetration—you cannot but long to ask me a hundred questions on the events of this day—on the share which Rashleigh has in your deliverance from this petty 'scrape—upon many other points which cannot but excite your attention—and I cannot bring myself to answer with the necessary falsehood and finesse—I should do it awkwardly, and lose your good opinion, if I have any share of it, as well as my own. It is best to say at once, Ask me no questions, I have it not in my power to reply to them."

Miss Vernon spoke these words with a tone of feeling which could not but make a corresponding impression upon me. I assured her she had neither to fear my urging her with impertinent questions, nor my misconstruing her declining to answer those which might in themselves be

reasonable, or at least natural. "I was too much obliged," I said, "by the interest she had taken in my affairs, to misuse the opportunity her goodness had afforded me of prying into her's—I only trusted and entreated, that if my services could at any time be useful, she would command them, without doubt or hesitation."

"Thank you—thank you," she replied; "your voice does not ring the cuckoo chime of compliment, but speaks like that of one who knows to what he pledges himself. If—but it is impossible—but yet, if an opportunity should occur, I will ask you if you remember this promise; and I assure you, I shall not be angry if I find you have forgotten it, for it is enough that you are sincere in your intentions just now—much may occur to alter them ere I call upon you, should that moment ever come, to assist Die Vernon, as if you were Die Vernon's brother."

"And if I were Die Vernon's brother," said I, "there cannot be less chance that

shall refuse my assistance—And now I am afraid I must not ask whether Rashleigh was willingly accessory to my deliverance?"

"Not at me; but you may ask it at himself, and, depend upon it, he will say *yes*; for rather than any good action should walk through the world like an unappropriated adjective in an ill-arranged sentence, he is always willing to stand noun substantive to it himself."

"And I must not ask whether this Campbell be himself the party who eased Mr Morris of his portmanteau, or whether the letter, which our friend the attorney received, was not a finesse to withdraw him from the scene of action, lest he should have marred the happy event of my deliverance? And I must not ask—"

"You must ask nothing at me," said Miss Vernon; "so it is quite in vain to go on putting cases. You are to think just as well of me, as if I had answered all these queries, and twenty others besides, as glibly as Rashleigh could have done; and observe,

whenever I touch my chin just so, it is a sign that I cannot speak upon the topic which happens to occupy your attention. I must settle signals of correspondence with you, because you are to be my confidant and my counsellor, only you are to know nothing whatever of my affairs."

"Nothing can be more reasonable," I replied, laughing; "and the extent of your confidence will, you may rely upon it, only be equalled by the sagacity of my counsels."

This sort of conversation brought us, in the highest good humour with each other, to Osbaldistone-Hall, where we found the family far advanced in the revels of the evening.

"Get some dinner for Mr Osbaldistone and me in the library," said Miss Vernon to a servant.—"I must have some compassion upon you," she added, turning to me, "and provide against your starving in this mansion of brutal abundance; otherwise I am not sure that I should show you my private

haunts. This same library is my den—the only corner of the Hall-house where I am safe from the Ouran-Outangs, my cousins. They never venture there, I suppose, for fear the folios should fall down and crack their skulls; for they will never affect their heads in any other way—So follow me."

And I followed through hall and bower, vaulted passage and winding-stair, until we reached the room where she had ordered our refreshments.

CHAPTER X.

> In the wide pile, by others heeded not,
> Hers was one sacred solitary spot,
> Whose gloomy aisles and bending shelves contain
> For moral hunger food, and cures for moral pain.
>
> *Anonymous.*

The library at Osbaldistone-Hall was a gloomy room, whose antique oaken shelves bent beneath the weight of the ponderous folios so dear to the seventeenth century, from which, under favour be it spoken, we have distilled matter for our quartos and octavos, and which, once more subjected to the alembic, may, should our sons be yet more frivolous than ourselves, be still farther reduced into duodecimos and pamphlets. The collection was chiefly of the classics, as well foreign as ancient history, and, above-

all, divinity. It was in wretched order. The priests, who, in succession, had acted as chaplains at the Hall, were, for many years, the only persons who entered its precincts, until Rashleigh's thirst of reading had led him to disturb the venerable spiders, who had muffled the fronts of the presses with their tapestry. His destination for the church rendered his conduct less absurd in his father's eyes, than if any of his other descendants had betrayed so strange a propensity, and Sir Hildebrand acquiesced in the room's receiving some repairs, so as to fit it for a sitting apartment. Still an air of dilapidation, as obvious as it was uncomfortable, pervaded the large apartment, and announced the neglect from which the knowledge which its walls contained had not been able to exempt it. The tattered tapestry, the worm-eaten shelves, the huge and clumsy, yet tottering, tables, desks, and chairs, the rusty grate, seldom gladdened by either sea-coal or faggots, intimated the contempt of the lords of Osbaldistone-Hall for learn-

ing, and the volumes which record its treasures.

"You think this place somewhat disconsolate, I suppose?" said Diana, as I glanced my eye round the forlorn apartment; "but to me it seems like a little paradise, for I call it my own, and fear no intrusion. Rashleigh was joint proprietor with me, while we were friends."

"And are you no longer so?" was my natural question.

Her forefinger immediately touched her dimpled chin, with an arch look of prohibition.

"We are still *allies*," she continued, "bound, like other confederate powers, by circumstances of mutual interest; but I am afraid, as will happen in other cases, the treaty of alliance has survived the amicable dispositions in which it had its origin. At any rate, we live less together; and when he comes through that door there, I vanish through this door here; and so, having made the discovery that we two were one too many for this apartment, as large as it seems,

Rashleigh, whose occasions frequently call him elsewhere, has generously made a cession of his rights in my favour ; so that I now endeavour to prosecute alone the studies in which he used formerly to be my guide."

"And what are those studies, if I may presume to ask?"

"Indeed you may, without the least fear of seeing my fore-finger raised to my chin. Science and history are my principal favourites ; but I also study poetry and the classics."

"And the classics? Do you read them in the original?"

"Unquestionably; Rashleigh, who is no contemptible scholar, taught me Greek and Latin, as well as most of the languages of modern Europe. I assure you, there has been some pains taken in my education, although I can neither sew a tucker, nor work cross-stitch, nor make a pudding, nor, as the vicar's fat wife,* with as much truth as elegance, good will, and politeness, was

pleased to say in my behalf, do any other useful thing in the versal world."

"And was this selection of studies Rashleigh's choice, or your own, Miss Vernon?" asked I.

"Um!" said she, as if hesitating to answer my question,—'it's not worth while lifting my finger about, after all—why, partly his, and partly mine. As I learned out of doors to ride a horse, and bridle and saddle him in case of necessity, and to clear a five-barred gate, and fire a gun without winking, and all other of those masculine accomplishments that my brute cousins run mad after, I wanted, like my rational cousin, to read Greek and Latin within doors, and make my complete approach to the tree of knowledge, which you men-scholars would engross to yourselves, in revenge, I suppose, for our common mother's share in the great original transgression."

"And Rashleigh readily indulged your propensity to learning?"

"Why, he wished to have me for his scholar, and he could but teach me that

which he knew himself—he was not like to instruct me in the mysteries of washing lace ruffles, or hemming cambric-handkerchiefs, I suppose."

"I admit the temptation of getting such a scholar made a weighty consideration on the tutor's part."

"O, if you begin to investigate Rashleigh's motives, my finger touches my chin once more. I can only be frank where my own are enquired into. But to resume—he has resigned the library in my favour, and never enters without leave had and obtained; and so I have taken the liberty to make it the place of deposit for some of my own goods and chattels, as you may see by looking round you."

"I beg pardon, Miss Vernon, but I really see nothing around these walls which I can distinguish as likely to claim you as mistress."

"That is, I suppose, because you neither see a shepherd or shepherdess wrought in worsted, handsomely framed in black ebony,—or a stuffed parrot,—or a breeding-

cage, full of canary birds,—or a house-wife-case, broidered with tarnished silver, —or a toilette-table, with a nest of japanned boxes, with as many angles as Christmas minced pies,—or a broken-backed spinet,—or a lute with three strings,—or rock-work, —or shell-work,—or needle-work, or work of any kind,—or a lap-dog, with a litter of blind puppies—None of these treasures do I possess," she continued, after a pause, in order to recover the breath she had lost in enumerating them—But there stands the sword of my ancestor Sir Richard Vernon, slain at Shrewsbury, and sorely slandered by a sad fellow called Will Shakspeare, whose Lancastrian partialities, and a certain knack at embodying them, has turned history upside down, or rather inside out;—and by that redoubted weapon hangs the mail of the still older Vernon, squire to the Black Prince, whose fate is the reverse of his descendant's, since he is more indebted to the bard, who took the trouble to celebrate him, for good will, than for talents,—

'Amiddes the route you might descern one
Brave knight, with pipes on shield, ycleped Vernon;
Like a borne fiend along the plain he thundered,
Prest to be carving throtes, while others plundered.'

Then there is a model of a new martingale which I invented myself—a great improvement on the Duke of Newcastle's; and there are the hood and bells of my falcon Cheviot, who spitted himself on a heron's bill at Horsely-moss—poor Cheviot, there is not a bird on the perches below, but are kites and riflers compared to him; and there is my own light fowling-piece, with an improved fire-lock; with twenty other treasures, each more valuable than another —And there, that speaks for itself."

She pointed to the carved oak-frame of a full length portrait by Vandyke, on which were inscribed, in Gothic letters, the words *Vernon semper viret.* I looked at her for explanation—"Do you not know," said she, with some surprise, "our motto—the Vernon motto, where,

"'Like the solemn vice, Iniquity,
We moralize two meanings in one word?'

And do you not know our cognizance, the pipes?" pointing to the armorial bearings sculptured on the oaken scutcheon, around which the legend was displayed.

"Pipes!—they look more like penny-whistles—But, pray, do not be angry with my ignorance," I continued, observing the colour mount to her cheeks, "I can mean no affront to your armorial bearings, for I do not even know my own."

"You an Osbaldistone, and confess so much!" she exclaimed. "Why, Percie, Thornie, John, Dickon—Wilfred himself, might be your instructor—Even ignorance itself is a plummet over you."

"With shame I confess it, my dear Miss Vernon, the mysteries couched under the grim hieroglyphics of heraldry, are to me as unintelligible as those of the pyramids of Egypt."

"What! is it possible?—Why, even my uncle reads Gwillym sometimes of a winter night—Not know the figures of heraldry?—of what could your father be thinking?"

"Of the figures of arithmetic," I an-

swered; "the most insignificant unit of which he holds more highly than all the blazonry of chivalry. But, though I am ignorant to this inexpressible degree, I have knowledge and taste enough to admire that splendid picture, in which I think I can discover a family likeness to you. What ease and dignity in the attitude—what richness of colouring—what breadth and depth of shade!"

"Is it really a fine painting?" she asked.

"I have seen many works of the renowned artist," I replied, "but never beheld one more to my liking."

"Well, I know as little of pictures as you do of heraldry," replied Miss Vernon; "yet I have the advantage of you, because I have always admired the painting without understanding its value."

"While I have neglected pipes and tabors, and all the whimsical combinations of chivalry, still I am informed that they floated in the fields of ancient fame. But you will allow their exterior appearance is not so peculiarly interesting to the unin-

formed spectator as that of a fine painting. —Who is the person here represented?"

"My grandfather—he shared the misfortunes of Charles I.; and, I am sorry to add, the excesses of his son. Our patrimonial estate was greatly impaired by his prodigality, and was altogether lost by his successor, my unfortunate father. But peace be with them who have got it—it was lost in the cause of loyalty."

"Your father, I presume, suffered in the political dissensions of the period?"

"He did indeed; he lost his all. And hence is his child a dependent orphan; eating the bread of others; subjected to their caprices, and compelled to study their inclinations: Yet prouder of having had such a father, than if, playing a more prudent, but less upright part, he had left me possessor of all the fair baronies which his family once possessed."

As she thus spoke, the entrance of the servants with the dinner cut off all conversation, but that of a general nature.

When our hasty meal was concluded, and the wine placed on the table, the domestic informed us, " that Mr Rashleigh had desired to be told when our dinner was removed."

" Tell him," said Miss Vernon, " we shall be happy to see him if he will step this way—place another wine-glass and chair, and leave the room.—You must retire with him when he goes away," she continued, addressing herself to me; " even my liberality cannot spare a gentleman above eight hours out of the twenty-four; and I think we have been together for at least that length of time."

" The old scythe-man has moved so rapidly," I answered, " that I could not count his strides."

" Hush !" said Miss Vernon, " here comes Rashleigh ;" and she drew off her chair, to which I had approached mine rather closely, so as to place a greater distance between us.

A modest tap at the door; a gentle man-

ner of opening when invited to enter; a studied softness and humility of step and deportment, announced that the education of Rashleigh Osbaldistone at the College of St Omers accorded well with the ideas I entertained of the manners of an accomplished Jesuit. I need not add, that, as a sound protestant, these ideas were not the most favourable. "Why should you use the ceremony of knocking," said Miss Vernon, "when you knew that I was not alone?"

This was spoken with a burst of impatience, as if she had felt that Rashleigh's air of caution and reserve covered some insinuation of impertinent suspicion. "You have taught me the form of knocking at this door so perfectly, my fair cousin," answered Rashleigh, without change of voice or manner, "that habit has become a second nature."

"I prize sincerity more than courtesy, sir, and you know I do," was Miss Vernon's reply.

"Courtesy is a gallant gay, a courtier by name and by profession," replied Rashleigh, "and therefore most fit for a lady's bower."

"But Sincerity is the true Knight," retorted Miss Vernon, "and therefore much more welcome, cousin. But, to end a debate not over amusing to your stranger kinsman, sit down, Rashleigh, and give Mr Francis Osbaldistone your countenance to his glass of wine. I have done the honours of the dinner for the credit of Osbaldistone Hall."

Rashleigh sate down, and filled his glass, glancing his eye from Diana to me, with an embarrassment which his utmost efforts could not entirely disguise. I thought he appeared to be uncertain concerning the extent of confidence she might have reposed in me, and hastened to lead the conversation into a channel which should sweep away his suspicion that Diana might have betrayed any secrets which rested between them. "Miss Vernon," I said, "Mr Rashleigh, has recommended me to return my thanks to you

for my speedy disengagement from the ridiculous accusation of Morris; and, unjustly fearing my gratitude might not be warm enough to remind me of this duty, she has put my curiosity on its side, by referring me to you for an account, or rather explanation, of the events of the day."

"Indeed?" answered Rashleigh; "I should have thought," (looking keenly at Miss Vernon,) "that the lady herself might have stood interpreter;" and his eye, reverting from her face, sought mine as if to search from the expression of my features, whether Diana's communication had been as narrowly limited as my words had intimated. Miss Vernon retorted his inquisitorial glance with one of decided scorn; while I, uncertain whether to deprecate or resent his obvious suspicion, replied; "If it is your pleasure, Mr Rashleigh, as it has been Miss Vernon's, to leave me in ignorance, I must necessarily submit; but, pray, do not withhold your information from me, on the ground of imagining that I have al-

ready obtained any on the subject. For I tell you as a man of honour, I am as ignorant as that picture of any thing relating to the events I have witnessed to-day, excepting that I understand from Miss Vernon, that you have been kindly active in my favour."

"Miss Vernon has over-rated my humble efforts," said Rashleigh, "though I claim full credit for my zeal. The truth is, that as I gallopped back to get some one of our family to join me in becoming your bail, which was the most obvious, or, indeed, I may say, the only way of serving you which occurred to my stupidity, I met the man Cawmil—Colville—Campbell, or whatsoever they call him. I had understood from Morris that he was present when the robbery took place, and had the good fortune to prevail on him, (with some difficulty, I confess,) to tender his evidence in your exculpation, which I presume was the means of your being released from an unpleasant situation."

"Indeed?—I am much your debtor for procuring such a seasonable evidence in my behalf. But I cannot see why, (having been, as he said, a fellow-sufferer with Morris,) it should have required much trouble to persuade him to step forth and bear evidence, whether to convict the actual robber, or free an innocent person."

"You do not know the genius of that man's country, sir," answered Rashleigh; "discretion, prudence, and foresight, are their leading qualities; these are only modified by a narrow-spirited, but yet ardent patriotism, which forms as it were the outmost of the concentric bulwarks with which a Scotchman fortifies himself against all the attacks of a generous philanthropical principle. Surmount this mound, you find an inner and still dearer barrier—the love of his province, his village, or, most probably, his clan; storm this second obstacle, you have a third—his attachment to his own family—his father, mother, sons,

daughters, uncles, aunts, and cousins, to the ninth generation. It is within these limits that a Scotchman's social affection expands itself, never reaching those which are outermost, till all means of discharging itself in the interior circles have been exhausted. It is within these circles that his heart throbs, each pulsation being fainter and fainter, till, beyond the widest boundary, it is almost unfelt. And what is worst of all, could you surmount all these concentric outworks, you have an inner citadel, deeper, higher, and more efficient than them all—a Scotchman's love for himself."

"All this is extremely eloquent and metaphorical, Rashleigh," said Miss Vernon, who listened with unrepressed impatience; "there are only two objections to it: first, it is *not* true; secondly, if true, it is nothing to the purpose."

"It *is* true, my fairest Diana," returned Rashleigh; "and moreover, it is most instantly to the purpose. It is true, because

you cannot deny that I know the country and people intimately, and the character is drawn from deep and accurate consideration; and it is to the purpose, because it answers Mr Francis Osbaldistone's question, and shews why this same wary Scotchman, considering our kinsman to be neither his countryman, nor a Campbell, nor his cousin in any of the inextricable combinations by which they extend their pedigree; and, above all, seeing no prospect of personal advantage, but, on the contrary, much hazard of loss of time and delay of business—"

"With other inconveniencies, perhaps, of a nature yet more formidable," interrupted Miss Vernon.

"Of which, doubtless, there might be many," said Rashleigh, continuing in the same tone—"In short, my theory shows why this man, hoping for no advantage, and afraid of some inconvenience, might require a degree of persuasion ere he could be prevailed on to give his testimony in favour of Mr Osbaldistone."

"It seems surprising to me," I observed, "that during the glance I cast over the declaration, or whatever it is termed, of Mr Morris, he should never have mentioned that Campbell was in his company when he met the maurauders."

"I understood from Campbell, that he had taken his solemn promise not to mention that circumstance," replied Rashleigh; "his reason for exacting such an engagement you may guess from what I have hinted—he wished to get back to his own country undelayed, and unembarrassed by any of the judicial enquiries which he would have been under the necessity of attending, had the fact of his being present at the robbery taken air while he was on this side of the Border. But let him once be as distant as the Forth, Morris will, I warrant you, come forth with all he knows about him, and, it may be, a good deal more. Besides, Campbell is a very extensive dealer in cattle, and has often occasion to send great droves over into Northumberland; and,

when driving such a trade, he would be a great fool to embroil himself with our Northumbrian thieves, than whom no men who live are more vindictive."

"I dare be sworn of that," said Miss Vernon, with a tone which implied something more than a simple acquiescence in the proposition.

"Still," said I, resuming the subject, "allowing the force of the reasons which Campbell might have for desiring that Morris should be silent with regard to his promise when the robbery was committed, I cannot yet see how he could attain so much influence over the man, as to make him suppress his evidence in that particular, at the manifest risk of subjecting his story to discredit."

Rashleigh agreed with me, that it was very extraordinary, and seemed to regret that he had not questioned the Scotchman more closely on that subject, which he allowed looked extremely mysterious. "But," he asked, immediately after this acquies-

cence, "are you very sure the circumstance of Morris's being accompanied by Campbell, is really not alluded to in his examination?"

"I read the paper over hastily," said I; "but it is my strong impression, that no such circumstance is mentioned; at least it must have been touched on very slightly, since it failed to catch my attention."

"True, true," answered Rashleigh, forming his own inference while he adopted my words; "I incline to think with you, that the circumstance must in reality have been mentioned, but so slightly, that it failed to attract your attention. And then, as to Campbell's interest with Morris, I incline to suppose that it must have been gained by playing upon his fears. This chicken-hearted fellow, Morris, is bound, I understand, for Scotland, destined for some little employment under government; and, possessing the courage of the wrathful dove, or most magnanimous mouse, he may have been afraid to encounter the ill-will of such a kill-

cow as Campbell, whose very appearance would be enough to fright him out of his little wits. You observed that Mr Campbell has at times a keen and animated manner—something of a martial cast in his tone and bearing."

"I own," I replied, "that his expression struck me as being occasionally fierce and sinister, and little adapted to his peaceable professions. Has he served in the army?"

"Yes—no—not, strictly speaking, *served;* but he has been, I believe, like most of his countrymen, trained to arms. Indeed, among the hills, they carry them from boyhood to the grave. So, if you know any thing of your fellow-traveller, you will easily judge, that, going to such a country, he will take care to avoid a quarrel if he can help it with any of the natives.—But, come, I see you decline your wine—and I too am a degenerate Osbaldistone, so far as respects the circulation of the bottle. If you will go to my room, I will hold you a hand at piquet."

We rose to take leave of Miss Vernon, who had from time to time suppressed, apparently with difficulty, a strong temptation to break in upon Rashleigh's details. As we left the room, the smothered fire broke forth. "Mr Osbaldistone," she said, "your own observation will enable you to verify the justice, or injustice, of Rashleigh's suggestions concerning such individuals as Mr Campbell and Mr Morris. But, in slandering Scotland, he has borne false witness against a whole country; and I request you will allow no weight to his evidence."

"Perhaps I may find it somewhat difficult to obey your injunction, Miss Vernon; for I must own I was bred up with no very favourable idea of our northern neighbours."

"Distrust that part of your education, sir," she replied, "and let the daughter of a Scotchwoman pray you to respect the land which gave her parent birth, until your own observation has proved them to be unwor-

thy of your good opinion. Preserve your hatred and contempt for dissimulation, baseness, and falsehood, wheresoever they are to be met with. You will find enough of all without leaving England.—Adieu, gentlemen,—I wish you good evening."

And she signed to the door, with the manner of a princess dismissing her train.

We retired to Rashleigh's apartment, where a servant brought us coffee and cards. I had formed my resolution to press Rashleigh no farther on the events of the day. A mystery, and, as I thought, not of a favourable complexion, appeared to hang over his conduct; but to ascertain if my suspicions were just, it was necessary to throw him off his guard. We cut for the deal, and were soon earnestly engaged in our play. I thought I perceived in this trifling for amusement (for the stake which Rashleigh proposed was a mere trifle) something of a fierce and ambitious temper. He seemed perfectly to understand the beautiful

game at which he played, but preferred, as it were on principle, the risking bold and precarious strokes to the ordinary rules of play, and neglecting the minor and better balanced chances of the game; he hazarded every thing for the chance of piqueing, repiqueing, or capotting his adversary. So soon as the intervention of a game or two at piquet, like the music between the acts of a drama, had completely interrupted our previous course of conversation, Rashleigh appeared to tire of the game, and the cards were superseded by discourse, in which he assumed the lead.

More learned than soundly wise—better acquainted with men's minds than with the moral principles that ought to regulate them, he had still powers of conversation which I have rarely seen equalled, never excelled. Of this his manner implied some consciousness; at least, it appeared to me that he had studied hard to improve his natural advantages of a melodious voice, fluent and happy expression, apt language and fer-

vid imagination. He was never loud, never overbearing, never so much occupied with his own thoughts, as to outrun either the patience or the comprehension of those he conversed with. His ideas succeeded each other with the gentle but unintermitting flow of a plentiful and bounteous spring; while I have heard those of others, who aimed at distinction in conversation, rush along like the turbid gush from the sluice of a mill-pond, as hurried, and as early exhausted. It was late at night ere I could part from a companion so fascinating; and, when I gained my own apartment, it cost me no small effort to recal to my mind the character of Rashleigh, such as I had pictured him previous to this tete-a-tete.

So effectually, my dear Tresham, does the sense of being pleased and amused blunt our faculties of perception and discrimination of character, that I can only compare it to the taste of certain fruits, at once luscious and poignant, which renders our pa-

late totally unfit for relishing or distinguishing the viands which are subsequently subjected to its criticism.

CHAPTER VII.

What gars you gaunt, my merry men a'?
What gars ye look sae dreary?
What gars ye hing your head sae sair
In the castle of Balwearie?

Old Scotch Ballad.

THE next morning chanced to be Sunday, a day peculiarly hard to be got rid of at Osbaldistone-Hall; for after the formal religious service of the morning had been performed, at which all the family regularly attended, it was hard to say upon which individual, Rashleigh and Miss Vernon excepted, the fiend of ennui descended with the most abundant outpouring of his spirit. To speak of my yesterday's embarrassment amused Sir Hildebrand for several minutes, and he congratulated me on my deliverance.

from Morpeth or Hexham jail, as he would have done if I had fallen in attempting to clear a five-barred gate, and got up without hurting myself.

"Hast had a lucky turn, lad; but do na be over venturous again. What, man! the king's road is free to all men, be they Whigs, be they Tories!"

"On my word, sir, I am innocent of interrupting it; and it is the most provoking thing on earth, that every person will take it for granted that I am accessory to a crime which I despise and detest, and which would, moreover, deservedly forfeit my life to the laws of my country."

"Well, well, lad; even so be it; I ask no questions—no man bound to tell on himsell—that's fair play, or the devil's in't."

Rashleigh here came to my assistance; but I could not help thinking that his arguments were calculated rather as hints to his father to put on a show of acquiescence in my declaration of innocence, than fully to establish it.

"In your own house, my dear sir—and your own nephew—you will not surely persist in hurting his feelings, by seeming to discredit what he is so strongly interested in affirming. No doubt, you are fully deserving of all his confidence, and I am sure were there any thing you could do to assist him in this strange affair, he would have recourse to your goodness. But my cousin Frank has been dismissed as an innocent man, and no one is entitled to suppose him otherwise. For my part, I have not the least doubt of his innocence; and our family-honour, I conceive, requires that we should maintain it with tongue and sword against the whole country."

"Rashleigh," said his father, looking fixedly at him, "thou art a sly loon—thou hast ever been too cunning for me, and too cunning for most folks. Have a care thou prove na too cunning for thysell—two faces under one hood is no true heraldry.—And since we talk of heraldry, I'll go and read Gwillym."

This resolution he intimated with a yawn, resistless as that of the Goddess in the Dunciad, which was responsively echoed by his giant-sons, as they dispersed in quest of the pastimes to which their minds severally inclined them.—Percie to discuss a pot of March beer with the steward in the butlery,—Thorncliff to cut a pair of cudgels, and fix them in their wicker-hilts,—John to dress May-flies,—Dickon to play at pitch and toss by himself—his right hand against his left,—and Wilford to bite his thumbs, and hum himself into a slumber which should last till dinner-time, if possible. Miss Vernon had retired to the library.

Rashleigh and I were left alone in the old hall, from which the servants, with their usual bustle and awkwardness, had at length contrived to hurry the remains of our substantial breakfast. I took the opportunity to upbraid him with the manner in which he had spoken of my affair to his father, which I frankly stated was highly offensive to me, as it seemed rather to exhort Sir

Hildebrand to conceal his suspicions, than to root them out.

"Why, what can I do, my dear friend?" replied Rashleigh; "my father's disposition is so tenacious of suspicions of all kinds, when once they take root, which, to do him justice, does not easily happen, that I have always found it the best way to silence him upon such subjects, instead of arguing with him. Thus I get the better of the weeds which I cannot eradicate, by cutting them over as often as they appear, until at length they die away of themselves. There is neither wisdom nor profit in disputing with such a mind as Sir Hildebrand's, which hardens itself against conviction, and believes in its own inspirations as firmly as we good catholics do in those of the Holy Father of Rome."

"It is very hard though, that I should live in the house of a man, and he a near relation too, who will persist in believing me guilty of a highway robbery."

"My father's foolish opinion, if one may

give that epithet to any opinion of a father's, does not affect your real innocence; and as to the disgrace of the fact, depend on it, that, considered in all its bearings, political as well as moral, Sir Hildebrand regards it as a meritorious action—a weakening of the enemy—a spoiling of the Amalekites—and you will stand the higher in his regard for your supposed accession to it."

"I desire no man's regard, Mr Rashleigh, on such terms as must sink me in my own; and I think these injurious suspicions will afford a very good reason for quitting Osbaldistone-Hall, which I shall do whenever I can communicate on the subject with my father."

The dark countenance of Rashleigh, though little accustomed to betray its master's feelings, exhibited a suppressed smile, which he instantly chastened by a sigh.

"You are a happy man, Frank—you go and come, as the wind bloweth where it listeth. With your address, taste, and talents, you will soon find circles where they

will be more valued, than amid the dull inmates of this mansion; while I——" he paused.

"And what is there in your lot that can make you or any one envy mine, an outcast, as I may almost term myself, from my father's house and favour?"

"Ay, but," answered Rashleigh, "consider the gratified sense of independence which you must have attained by a very temporary sacrifice, for such I am sure yours will prove to be—consider the power of acting as a free agent, of cultivating your own talents in the way to which your taste determines you, and in which you are well qualified to distinguish yourself—Fame and freedom are cheaply purchased by a few weeks residence in the North, even though your place of exile be Osbaldistone-Hall.—A second Ovid in Thrace, you have not his reasons for writing Tristia."

"I do not know," said I, blushing as became a young scribbler, "how you should

be so well acquainted with my truant studies."

"There was an emissary of your father's here some time since, a young coxcomb, one Twineall, who informed me concerning your secret sacrifices to the muses, and added, that some of your verses had been greatly admired by the best judges."

Tresham, I believe you are guiltless of having ever essayed to build the lofty rhyme; but you must have known in your day many an apprentice and fellow-craft, if not some of the master-masons in the temple of Apollo. Vanity is their universal foible, from him who decorated the shades of Twickenham, to the veriest scribbler whom he has lashed in his Dunciad. I had my own share of this common failing, and without considering how little likely this young fellow Twineall was, by taste and habits, to be acquainted either with one or two little pieces of poetry, which I had at times insinuated into Button's coffee-house, or to report the opinion

of the critics who frequented that resort of wit and literature, I almost instantly gorged the bait, which Rashleigh perceiving, improved his opportunity by a diffident, yet apparently very anxious request, to be permitted to see some of my manuscript productions.

"You shall give me an evening in my own apartment," he continued; "for I must soon lose the charms of literary society for the drudgery of commerce, and the coarse every-day avocations of the world. I repeat it, that my compliance with my father's wishes for the advantage of my family, is indeed a sacrifice, especially considering the calm and peaceful profession to which my education destined me."

I was vain, but not a fool, and this hypocrisy was too strong for me to swallow—"You would not persuade me," I replied, "that you really regret to exchange the situation of an obscure catholic priest, with all its privations, for wealth and society, and the pleasures of the world?"

Rashleigh saw that he had coloured his affectation of moderation too highly, and after a second's pause, during which, I suppose, he calculated the degree of candour which it was necessary to use with me, (that being a quality of which he was never needlessly profuse) he answered with a smile,—"At my age to be condemned, as you say, to wealth and the world, does not, indeed, sound so alarming as perhaps it ought to do. But, with pardon be it spoken, you have mistaken my destination—a catholic priest, if you will, but not an obscure one—No, sir, Rashleigh Osbaldistone will be more obscure, should he rise to be the richest citizen in London, than he might have been as a member of a church, whose ministers, as some one says, 'set their sandall'd feet on princes.'—My family interest at a certain exiled court is high, and the weight which that court ought to possess, and does possess at Rome, is yet higher—my talents not altogether inferior to the education I have received—In sober judgment, I might have looked forward to high

eminence in the church—in the dream of fancy; to the very highest—Why might not," (he added, laughing, for it was part of his manner to keep much of his discourse apparently betwixt jest and earnest,)—why might not Cardinal Osbaldistone have swayed the fortunes of empires, well-born and well-connected, as well as the low-born Mazarin, or Alberoni the son of an Italian gardener?"

"Nay, I can give you no reason to the contrary; but in your place I should not much regret losing the chance of such precarious and invidious elevation."

"Neither would I," he replied, "were I sure that my present establishment was more certain; but that must depend upon circumstances, which I can only learn by experience—the disposition of your father for example."

"Confess the truth without finesse, Rashleigh; you would willingly know something of him from me?"

"Since, like Die Vernon, you make a

point of following the banner of the good knight Sincerity, I reply—certainly."

"Well, then, you will find in my father a man who has followed the paths of thriving more for the exercise they afforded to his talents, than for the love of the gold with which they are strewed. His active mind would have been happy in any situation which gave it scope for exertion, though that exertion had been its sole reward. But his wealth has accumulated, because, moderate and frugal in his habits, no new sources of expence have occurred to dispose of his increasing income. He is a man who hates dissimulation in others; never practises it himself; and is peculiarly alert in discovering motives through the colouring of language. Himself silent by habit, he is readily disgusted by great talkers; the rather, that the circumstances by which he is most interested afford no great scope for conversation. He is severely strict in the duties of religion; but you have no reason to fear his interference with yours, for he

regards toleration as a sacred principle of political economy. But if you have any jacobitical partialities, as is naturally to be supposed, you will do well to suppress them in his presence, as well as the least tendency to the highflying or Tory principles; for he holds both in utter detestation. For the rest, his word is his own bond, and must be the law of all who act under him. He will fail in his duty to no one, and will permit no one to fail towards him; to cultivate his favour, you must execute his commands, instead of echoing his sentiments. His greatest failings arise out of prejudices connected with his own profession, or rather his exclusive devotion to it, which makes him see little worthy of praise or attention, unless it be, in some measure, connected with commerce."

"O rare-painted portrait!" exclaimed Rashleigh, when I was silent—"Vandyke was a dauber to you, Frank. I see thy sire before me in all his strength and weakness,

loving and honouring the King as a sort of lord mayor of the empire, or chief of the board of trade;—venerating the Commons, for the acts regulating the export trade;—and respecting the Peers, because the Lord Chancellor sits on a wool-sack."

"Mine was a likeness, Rashleigh; yours is a caricature. But in return for the *carte de pays* which I have unfolded to you. give me some lights on the geography of the unknown lands—"

"On which you are wrecked," said Rashleigh. "It is not worth while; it is no isle of Calypso, umbrageous with shade and intricate with sylvan labyrinth—but a bare ragged Northumbrian moor, with as little to interest curiosity as to delight the eye—you may descry it in all its nakedness in half an hour's survey, as well as if I were to lay it down before you by line and compass."

"O, but something there is, worthy a more attentive survey—What say you to Miss Vernon? Does not she form an inte-

resting object in the landscape, were all around as rude as Iceland's coast?"

I could plainly perceive that Rashleigh disliked the topic now presented to him; but my frank communication had given me the advantageous title to make enquiries in my turn. Rashleigh felt this, and found himself obliged to follow my lead, however difficult he might find it to play his cards successfully. "I have known less of Miss Vernon," he said, "for some time, than I was wont to do formerly. In early age I was her tutor; but as she advanced towards womanhood, my various avocations,—the gravity of the profession to which I was destined,—the peculiar nature of her engagements,—our mutual situation, in short, rendered a close and constant intimacy dangerous and improper. I believe Miss Vernon might consider my reserve as unkindness, but it was my duty; I felt as much as she seemed to do, when compelled to give way to prudence. But where was the safety in cultivating an intimacy with a beautiful

and susceptible girl, whose heart, you are aware, must be given either to the cloister or to a betrothed husband?"

"The cloister or a betrothed husband?" I echoed—"Is that the alternative destined for Miss Vernon?"

"It is indeed," said Rashleigh, with a sigh. "I need not, I suppose, caution you against the danger of cultivating too closely the friendship of Miss Vernon; you are a man of the world, and know how far you can indulge yourself in her society, with safety to yourself and justice to her. But I warn you, that, considering her ardent temper, you must let your experience keep guard over her as well as yourself, for the specimen of yesterday may serve to show her extreme thoughtlessness and neglect of decorum."

There was something, I was sensible, of truth, as well as good sense, in all this; it seemed to be given as a friendly warning, and I had no right to take it amiss; yet I felt I could with pleasure have run Rash-

leigh Osbaldistone through the body all the time he was speaking.

The deuce take his insolence! was my internal meditation. Would he wish me to infer, that Miss Vernon had fallen in love with that hatchet-face of his, and become degraded so low as to require his shyness to cure her of an imprudent passion? I will have his meaning from him, was my resolution, if I should drag it out with cart-ropes.

For this purpose, I placed my temper under as accurate a guard as I could, and observed, "That, for a lady of her good sense and acquired accomplishments, it was to be regretted that Miss Vernon's manners were rather blunt and rustic."

"Frank and unreserved, at least, to the extreme," replied Rashleigh; "yet, trust me, she has an excellent heart. To tell you the truth, should she continue her extreme aversion to the cloister, and to her destined husband, and should my own labours in the mine of Plutus promise to secure me a decent independence, I shall

think of renewing our acquaintance, and sharing it with Miss Vernon."

With all his fine voice, and well-turned periods, thought I, this same Rashleigh Osbaldistone is the ugliest and most conceited coxcomb I ever met with.

"But," continued Rashleigh, as if thinking aloud, "I should not like to supplant Thorncliff."

"Supplant Thorncliff!—Is your brother Thorncliff," I enquired, with great surprise, "the destined husband of Diana Vernon?"

"Why, ay; her father's commands, and a certain family-contract, destine her to marry one of Sir Hildebrand's sons. A dispensation has been obtained from Rome to Diana Vernon to marry *Blank* Osbaldistone, Esq., son of Sir Hildebrand Osbaldistone, of Osbaldistone-Hall, Bart., and so forth; and it only remains to pitch upon the happy man, whose name shall fill the gap in the manuscript. Now as Percie is seldom sober, my father pitched on Thorncliff, as the second prop of the family, and

therefore most proper to carry on the line of the Osbaldistones."

"The young lady," said I, forcing myself to assume an air of pleasantry, which, I believe, became me extremely ill, "would perhaps, have been inclined to look a little lower on the family-tree, for the branch to which she was desirous of clinging."

"I cannot say," he replied. "There is room for little choice in our family; Dick is a gambler, John a boor, and Wilfred an ass. I believe my father really made the best selection for poor Die, after all."

"The present company," said I, "being always excepted."

"O, my destination to the church placed me out of the question; otherwise I will not affect to say, that, qualified by my education both to instruct and guide Miss Vernon, I might have been a more creditable choice than any of my elders."

"And so thought the young lady, doubtless?"

"You are not to suppose so," answered

Rashleigh, with an affectation of denial; which was contrived to convey the strongest affirmation the case admitted of—"friendship—only friendship—formed the tie betwixt us, and the tender affection of an opening mind to its only instructor—Love came not near us—I told you I was wise in time."

I felt little inclination to pursue this conversation any farther, and, shaking myself clear of Rashleigh, withdrew to my own apartment, which I recollect I traversed with much vehemence of agitation; repeated aloud the expressions which had most offended me. "Susceptible—ardent—tender affection—Love!—Diana Vernon, the most beautiful creature I ever beheld, in love with him, the bandy-legged, bull-necked, limping scoundrel!—Richard the Third in all but his hump-back!—And yet the opportunities he must have had during his cursed course of lectures; and the fellow's flowing and easy strain of sentiment; and her extreme seclusion from every one who spoke

and acted with common sense; ay, and her obvious pique at him, mixed with admiration of his talents, which looked as like the result of neglected attachment as any thing else—Well, and what is it to me that I should storm and rage at it? Is Diana Vernon the first pretty girl that has loved or married an ugly fellow? And if she was free of every Osbaldistone of them, what concern is it of mine?—A catholic—a jacobite—a termagant into the boot—for me to look that way were utter madness."

By throwing such reflections on the flame of my displeasure, I subdued it into a sort of smouldering heart-burning, and appeared at the dinner-table in as sulky a humour as could well be imagined.

CHAPTER XII.

"Drunk?—and speak parrot?—and squabble?—swagger?—
Swear?—and discourse fustian with one's own shadow?"
OTHELLO.

I HAVE already told you, my dear Tresham, which probably was no news to you, that my principal fault was an unconquerable pitch of pride, which exposed me to frequent mortification. I had not even whispered to myself, that I loved Diana Vernon; yet no sooner did I hear Rashleigh talk of her as a prize which he might stoop to carry off, or neglect at his pleasure, than every step which the poor girl had taken, in the innocence and openness of her heart, to form a sort of friendship with me, seemed in my eyes the most insulting coquetry. "Soh! she would secure

me as a *pis aller*, I suppose, in case Mr Rashleigh Osbaldistone should not take compassion upon her! but I will satisfy her that I am not a person to be trepanned in that manner—I will make her sensible that I see through her arts, and that I scorn them."

I did not reflect for a moment, that all this indignation, which I had no right whatsoever to entertain, proved that I was any-thing but indifferent to Miss Vernon's charms, and I sate down to table in high ill-humour with her and all the daughters of Eve.

Miss Vernon heard me, with surprise, return ungracious answers to one or two playful strokes of satire which she threw out with her usual freedom of speech; but, having no suspicion that offence was meant, she only replied to my rude repartees with jests somewhat similar, but polished by her good temper, though pointed by her wit. At length she perceived I was really out of humour, and answered one of my rude

speeches. "They say, Mr Frank, that one may gather sense from fools—I heard cousin Wilfred refuse to play any longer at cudgels the other day with cousin Thornie, because cousin Thornie got angry, and struck harder than the rules of amicable combat, it seems, permitted. 'Were I to break your head in good earnest,' quoth honest Wilfred, 'I care not how angry you are, for I should do it so much the more easily;—but it's hard I should get raps over the costard, and only pay you back in make-believes'—Do you understand the moral of this, Frank?"

"I have never felt myself under the necessity, madam, of studying how to extract the slender portion of sense with which this family season their conversation."

"Necessity! and madam!—you surprise me, Mr Osbaldistone."

"I am unfortunate in doing so."

"Am I to suppose that this capricious tone is serious; or is it only assumed to make your good-humour more valuable?"

"You have a right to the attention of so many gentlemen in this family, Miss Vernon, that it cannot be worth your while to enquire into the cause of my stupidity and bad spirits."

"What! am I to understand then you have deserted my faction, and gone over to the enemy?"—

Then, looking across the table, and observing that Rashleigh, who was seated opposite, was watching us with a singular expression of interest on his harsh features, she continued,

> "Horrible thought!—Ay, now I see 'tis true,
> For the grim-visaged Rashleigh smiles on me,
> And points at thee for his——

"Well, thank Heaven, and the unprotected state which has taught me endurance, I do not take offence easily; and that I may not be forced to quarrel, whether I like it or no, I have the honour, earlier than usual, to wish you a happy digestion of your dinner and your bad humour."

And she left the table accordingly.

Upon Miss Vernon's departure, I found myself very little satisfied with my own conduct. I had hurled back offered kindness, of which circumstances had but lately pointed out the honest sincerity, and I had but just stopped short of insulting the beautiful, and, as she had said with some emphasis, the unprotected being by whom it was proffered. My conduct seemed brutal in my own eyes. To combat or drown these painful reflections, I applied myself more frequently than usual to the wine which circulated on the table.

The agitated state of my feelings combined with my habits of temperance to give rapid effect to the beverage. Habitual topers, I believe, acquire the power of soaking themselves with a quantity of liquor which does little more than muddy those intellects, that, in their sober state, are none of the clearest; but men who are strangers to the vice of drunkenness as a habit, are more powerfully acted upon by

intoxicating liquors. My spirits, once aroused, became extravagant; I talked a great deal, argued upon what I knew nothing of, told stories of which I forgot the point, then laughed immoderately at my own forgetfulness; I accepted several bets without having the least judgment; I challenged the giant John to wrestle with me, although he had kept the ring at Hexham for a year, and I never tried so much as a single fall.

My uncle had the goodness to interpose and prevent this consummation of drunken folly, which, I suppose, would have otherwise ended in my neck being broken.

It has even been reported by my maligners, that I sung a song while under this vinous influence; but, as I remember nothing of it, and never attempted to turn a tune in all my life before or since, I would willingly hope there is no foundation for the calumny. I was absurd enough without this exaggeration. Without positively losing my senses, I speedily lost all command of my temper, and my impetuous passions

whirled me onward at their pleasure. I had sate down sulky and discontented, and disposed to be silent—the wine rendered me loquacious, disputacious, and quarrelsome. I contradicted whatever was asserted, and attacked, without any respect to my uncle's table, both his politics and his religion. The affected moderation of Rashleigh, which he well knew how to qualify with irritating ingredients, was even more provoking to me than the noisy and bullying language of his obstreperous brothers. My uncle, to do him justice, endeavoured to bring us to order, but his authority was lost amidst the tumult of wine and passion. At length, frantic at some real, or supposed injurious insinuation, I actually struck Rashleigh with my fist. No Stoic philosopher, superior to his own passion and that of others, could have received an insult with a higher degree of scorn. What he himself did not think it apparently worth while to resent, Thorncliff resented for him. Swords were drawn, and we exchan-

ged one or two passes, when the other brothers separated us by main force; and I shall never forget the diabolical sneer which writhed Rashleigh's wayward features, as I was forced from the apartment by the main strength of two of these youthful Titans. They secured me in my apartment by locking the door, and I heard them, to my inexpressible rage, laugh heartily as they descended the stairs. I essayed in my fury to break out; but the window-grates, and the strength of a door clenched with iron, resisted my efforts. At length I threw myself on my bed, and fell asleep amidst vows of dire revenge to be taken in the ensuing day.

But with the morning cool repentance came. I felt, in the keenest manner, the violence and absurdity of my own conduct, and was obliged to confess that wine and passion had lowered my intellects even below those of Wilfred Osbaldistone, whom I held in so much contempt. My uncomfortable reflections were by no means sooth-

ed by meditating the necessity of an apology for my improper behaviour, and recollecting that Miss Vernon must be a witness of my submission. The impropriety and unkindness of my conduct to her personally, added not a little to these galling considerations, and for this I could not even plead the miserable excuse of intoxication.

Under all these aggravating feelings of shame and degradation, I descended to the breakfast-hall, like a criminal to receive sentence. It chanced that a hard frost had rendered it impossible to take out the hounds, so that I had the additional mortification to meet the family, excepting only Rashleigh and Miss Vernon, in full divan, surrounding the cold venison-pasty and chine of beef. They were in high glee as I entered, and I could easily imagine that the jests were furnished at my expense. In fact, what I was disposed to consider with serious pain, was regarded as an excellent good joke by my uncle, and the greater part of my cousins. Sir Hilde-

brand, while he rallied me on the exploits of the preceding evening, swore he thought a young fellow had better be thrice drunk in one day, than sneak sober to bed like a presbyterian, and leave a batch of honest fellows, and a double quart of claret. And to back this consolatory speech, he poured out a large bumper of brandy, exhorting me to swallow a hair of the dog that had bit me.

"Never mind these lads laughing, nevoy," he continued; "they would have been all as great milk-sops as yourself had I not nursed them, as one may say, on the toast and tankard."

Ill-nature was not the fault of my cousins in general; they saw I was vexed and hurt at the recollections of the preceding evening, and endeavoured, with clumsy kindness, to remove the painful impression they had made on me. Thorncliff alone looked sullen and unreconciled. This young man had never liked me from the beginning; and in the marks of attention occasionally

shewn me by his brothers, awkward as they were, he alone had never joined. If it was true, of which, however, I began to have my doubts, that he was considered by the family, or regarded himself, as the destined husband of Miss Vernon, a sentiment of jealousy might have sprung up in his mind from the marked predilection which it was that young lady's pleasure to shew for one, whom Thorncliff might, perhaps, think likely to become a dangerous rival.

Rashleigh at last entered, his visage as dark as mourning weed, brooding, I could not but doubt, over the unjustifiable and disgraceful insult I had offered to him. I had already settled in my own mind how I was to behave on the occasion, and had schooled myself to believe, that true honour consisted not in defending, but in apologizing for, an injury so much disproportioned to any provocation I might have to allege.

I therefore hastened to meet Rashleigh, and to express myself in the highest de-

gree sorry for the violence with which I had acted on the preceding evening.

"No circumstances," I said, "could have wrung from me a single word of apology, save my own consciousness of the impropriety of my behaviour. I hoped my cousin would accept of my regrets so sincerely offered, and consider how much of my misconduct was owing to the excessive hospitality of Osbaldistone-Hall."

"He shall be friends with thee, lad," cried the honest knight, in the full effusion of his heart; "or d—n me, if I call him son more. Why, Rashie, dost stand there like a log? *Sorry for it* is all a gentleman can say, if he happens to do any thing awry, especially over his claret.—I served in Hounslow, and should know something, I think, of affairs of honour. Let me hear no more of this, and we'll go in a body and rummage out the badger in Birkenwood-bank."

Rashleigh's face resembled, as I have already noticed, no other countenance that

I ever saw. But this singularity lay not only in the features, but in the mode of changing their expression. Other countenances, in altering from grief to joy, or from anger to satisfaction, pass through some brief interval, ere the expression of the predominant passion supersedes entirely that of its predecessor. There is a sort of twilight, like that between the clearing up of the darkness and the rising of the sun, while the swollen muscles subside, the dark eye clears, the forehead relaxes and expands itself, and the whole countenance loses its sterner shades, and becomes serene and placid. Rashleigh's face exhibited none of these gradations, but changed almost instantaneously from the expression of one passion to that of the contrary. I can compare it to nothing but the sudden shifting of a scene in the theatre, where, at the whistle of the prompter, a cavern disappears and a grove arises.

My attention was strongly arrested by this peculiarity on the present occasion. At

Rashleigh's first entrance, "black he stood as night!" With the same inflexible countenance he heard my excuse and his father's exhortation; and it was not until Sir Hildebrand had done speaking, when the cloud cleared away at once, and he expressed, in the kindest and most civil terms, his perfect satisfaction with the very handsome apology I had offered.

"Indeed," he said, "I have so poor a brain myself, when I impose on it the least burthen beyond my usual three glasses, that I have only, like honest Cassio, a very vague recollection of the confusion of last night—remember a mass of things, but nothing distinctly—a quarrel, but nothing wherefore—So my dear cousin," he continued, shaking me kindly by the hand, "conceive how much I am relieved, by finding that I have to receive an apology, instead of having to make one—I will not have a word said upon the subject more; I should be very foolish to institute any scrutiny into an account—when the balance, which I

expected to be against me, has been so unexpectedly and agreeably struck in my favour. You see, Mr Osbaldistone, I am practising the language of Lombard Street, and qualifying myself for my new calling."

As I was about to answer, and raised my eyes for the purpose, they encountered those of Miss Vernon, who, having entered the room unobserved during the conversation, had given it her close attention. Abashed and confounded, I fixed my eyes on the ground, and made my escape to the breakfast-table, where I herded among my busy cousins.

My uncle, that the events of the preceding day might not pass out of our memory without a practical moral lesson, took occasion to give Rashleigh and me his serious advice to correct our milksop habits, as he termed them, and gradually to enure our brains to bear a gentlemanlike quantity of liquor, without brawls or breaking of heads. He recommended that we should begin piddling with a regular quart of cla-

·t per day, which, with the aid of March beer and brandy, made a handsome competence for a beginner in the art of toping. And for our encouragement, he assured us that he had known many a man who had lived to our years without having drank a pint of wine at a sitting, who yet, by falling into honest company, and following hearty example, had afterwards been numbered among the best good fellows of the time, and could carry off their six bottles under their belt quietly and comfortably, without brawling or babbling, and be neither sick nor sorry the next morning.

Sage as this advice was, and comfortable as was the prospect it held out to me, I profited but little by the exhortation; partly, perhaps, because, as often as I raised my eyes from the table, I observed Miss Vernon's looks fixed on me, in which I thought I could read grave compassion blended with regret and displeasure. I began to consider how I should seek a scene of explanation and apology with her also, when she gave

me to understand she was determined to save me the trouble of soliciting an interview. "Cousin Francis," she said, addressing me by the same title she used to give to the other Osbaldistones, although I had, properly speaking, no title to be called her kinsman, "I have encountered this morning a difficult passage in the Divina Comedia of Dante, will you have the goodness to step to the library and give me your assistance? and when you have unearthed for me the meaning of the obscure Florentine, we will join the rest at Birkenwood-bank, and see their luck at unearthing the badger."

I signified, of course, my readiness to wait upon her. Rashleigh made an offer to accompany us. "I am something better skilled," he said, "at tracking the sense of Dante through the metaphors and elisions of his wild and gloomy poem, than at hunting the poor inoffensive hermit yonder out of his cave."

"Pardon me, Rashleigh," said Miss Ver-

son; "but as you are to occupy Mr Francis's place in the counting-house, you must surrender to him the charge of your pupil's education at Osbaldistone-Hall. We shall call you in, however, if there is any occasion, so pray do not look so grave upon it. Besides, it is a shame to you not to understand field-sports—What will you do should our uncle in Crane-Alley ask you the signs by which you track a badger?"

"Ay, true, Die,—true," said Sir Hildebrand with a sigh. "I misdoubt Rashleigh will be found short at the leap when he is put to the trial. An he would ha learned useful knowledge like his brothers, he was bred up where it grew, I wuss; but French antics, and book-learning, with the new turnips, and the rats, and the Hanoverians, ha changed the world that I ha known in Old England—But come along with us, Rashie, and carry my hunting staff, man; thy cousin lacks none of thy company as now, and I wonna ha Die crossed—It's neer be said there was but one woman in Os-

baldistone-Hall, and she died for lack of her will."

Rashleigh followed his father, as he commanded, not, however, ere he had whispered to Diana, "I suppose I must in discretion bring the courtier, Ceremony, in my company, and knock when I approach the door of the library?"

"No, no, Rashleigh," said Miss Vernon; "dismiss from your company the false archimage Dissimulation, and it will better insure you free access to our classical consultations."

So saying, she led the way to the library, and I followed,—like a criminal I was going to say to execution; but, as I bethink me, I have used the simile once, if not twice before. Without any simile at all then, I followed, with a sense of awkward and conscious embarrassment, which I would have given a great deal to shake off. I thought it a degrading and unworthy feeling to attend one upon such an occasion, having breathed the air of the continent long enough to have

imbibed the notion that lightness, gallantry, and something approaching to well-bred self-assurance, should distinguish the gentleman whom a fair lady selects for her companion in a tete-a-tete.

My English feelings, however, were too many for my French education, and I made, I believe, a very pitiful figure, when Miss Vernon, seating herself majestically in a huge elbow-chair in the library, like a judge about to hear a cause of importance, signed to me to take a chair opposite to her, (which I did, much like the poor fellow who is going to be tried) and entered upon conversation in a tone of bitter irony.

CHAPTER XIII.

Dire was his thought, who first in poison steep'd
The weapon formed for slaughter—direr his,
And worthier of damnation, who instill'd
The mortal venom in the social cup,
To fill the veins with death instead of life.

Anonymous.

"Upon my word, Mr Francis Osbaldistone," said Miss Vernon, with the air of one who thought herself fully entitled to assume the privilege of ironical reproach, which she was pleased to exert, "your character improves upon us, sir—I could not have thought that it was in you.—Yesterday might be considered as your assay-piece, to prove yourself entitled to be free of the corporation of Osbaldistone-Hall. But it was a master-piece."

"I am quite sensible of my ill-breeding,

Miss Vernon, and I can only say for myself, that I had received some communications by which my spirits were unusually agitated. I am conscious I was impertinent and absurd."

"You do yourself great injustice," said the merciless monitor—"you have contrived, by what I saw and have since heard, to exhibit in the course of one evening a happy display of all the various masterly qualifications which distinguish your several cousins;—the gentle and generous temper of the benevolent Rashleigh,—the temperance of Percie,—the cool courage of Thorncliff, —John's skill in dog-breaking,—Dickon's aptitude to betting,—all exhibited by the single individual Mr Francis, and that with a selection of time, place, and circumstance, worthy the taste and sagacity of the sapient Wilfred."

"Have a little mercy, Miss Vernon," said I; for I confess I thought the schooling as severe as the case merited, especially considering from what quarter it came,

"and forgive me if I suggest, as an excuse for follies I am not usually guilty of, the custom of this house and country. I am far from approving it; but we have Shakspeare's authority for saying, that good wine is a good familiar creature, and that any man living may be overtaken at some time."

"Ay, Mr Francis, but he places the panegyric and the apology in the mouth of the greatest villain his pencil has drawn. I will not, however, abuse the advantage your quotation has given me, by overwhelming you with the refutation with which the victim Cassio replies to the tempter Iago. I only wish you to know, that there is one person at least sorry to see a youth of talents and expectations sink into the slough in which the inhabitants of this house are nightly wallowing."

"I have but wet my shoe, I assure you, Miss Vernon, and am too sensible of the filth of the puddle to step farther in."

"If such be your resolution," she replied, "it is a wise one. But I was so

much vexed at what I heard, that your concerns have pressed before my own.—You behaved to me yesterday, during dinner, as if something had been told you which lessened or lowered me in your opinion—I beg leave to ask you what it was?"

I was stupified—the direct bluntness of the demand was much in the style one gentleman uses to another, when requesting explanation of any part of his conduct in a good-humoured yet determined manner, and was totally devoid of the circumlocutions, shadings, softenings, and periphrasis, which usually accompany explanations betwixt persons of different sexes in the higher orders of society.

I remained completely embarrassed; for it pressed on my recollection, that Rashleigh's communications, supposing them to be correct, ought to have rendered Miss Vernon rather an object of my compassion, than of my pettish resentment; and had they furnished the best apology possible for my own conduct, still I must have had the

utmost difficulty in detailing what inferred such necessary and natural offence to Miss Vernon's feelings. She observed my hesitation, and proceeded in a tone somewhat more peremptory, but still temperate and civil.

"I hope Mr Osbaldistone does not dispute my title to request this explanation. I have no relative who can protect me; it is, therefore, just that I be permitted to protect myself."

I endeavoured with hesitation to throw the blame of my rude behaviour upon indisposition—upon disagreeable letters from London. She suffered me to exhaust my apologies, and fairly to run myself aground, listening all the while with a smile of absolute incredulity.

"And now, Mr Francis, having gone through your prologue of excuses, with the same bad grace with which all prologues are delivered, please to draw the curtain, and shew me that which I desire to see. In a word, let me know what Rashleigh says

of me; for he is the grand engineer and first mover of all the machinery of Osbaldistone-Hall.

"But, supposing there was any thing to tell, Miss Vernon, what does he deserve that betrays the secrets of one ally to another?—Rashleigh, you yourself told me, remained your ally, though no longer your friend."

"I have neither patience for evasion, nor inclination for jesting, on the present subject. Rashleigh cannot—ought not—dare not, hold any language respecting me, Diana Vernon, but what I may demand to hear repeated. That there are subjects of secrecy and confidence between us, is most certain; but to such, his communications to you could have no relation; and with such, I, as an individual, have no concern."

I had by this time recovered my presence of mind, and hastily determined to avoid making any disclosure of what Rashleigh had told me in a sort of confidence. There was something unworthy in retailing private conversation; it could, I thought, do no

good, and must necessarily give Miss Vernon great pain. I therefore replied, gravely, "that nothing but frivolous talk had passed between Mr Rashleigh Osbaldistone and me on the state of the family at the Hall; and I protested, that nothing had been said which left a serious impression to her disadvantage. As a gentleman, I said, I could not be more explicit in reporting private conversation."

She started up with the animation of a Camilla about to advance into battle. "This shall not serve your turn, sir—I must have another answer from you." Her features kindled—her brow became flushed—her eye glanced wild-fire as she proceeded. "I demand such an explanation, as a woman basely slandered has a right to demand from every man who calls himself a gentleman—as a creature, motherless, friendless, alone in the world, left to her own guidance and protection, has a right to require from every being having a happier lot, in the name of that God who sent *them* into the

world to enjoy, and *her* to suffer. You shall not deny me—or," she added, looking solemnly upwards, "you will rue your denial, if there is justice for wrong either on earth or in Heaven."

I was utterly astonished at her vehemence, but felt, thus conjured, that it became my duty to lay aside scrupulous delicacy, and gave her briefly, but distinctly, the heads of the information which Rashleigh had conveyed to me.

She sate down and resumed her composure, as soon as I entered upon the subject, and when I stopped to seek for the most delicate turn of expression, she repeatedly interrupted me, with "Go on—pray, go on; the first word which occurs to you is the plainest, and must be the best. Do not think of my feelings, but speak as you would to an unconcerned third party."

Thus urged and encouraged, I stammered through all the account which Rashleigh had given of her early contract to marry an Osbaldistone, and of the uncertainty and

difficulty of her choice; and there I would willingly have paused. But her penetration discovered that there was still something behind, and even guessed to what it related.

"Well, it was ill-natured of Rashleigh to tell this tale on me. I am like the poor girl, in the Fairy Tale, who was betrothed in her cradle to the Black Bear of Norway, but complained chiefly of being called Bruin's bride by her companions at school. But besides all this, Rashleigh said something of himself with relation to me—Did he not?"

"He certainly hinted, that were it not for the idea of supplanting his brother, he would now, in consequence of his change of profession, be desirous that the word Rashleigh should fill up the blank in the dispensation, instead of the word Thorncliff."

"Aye? indeed?" she replied; "was he so very condescending?—Too much honour for his humble hand-maid, Diana Vernon—And she, I suppoce, was to be enraptured with joy could such a substitute be effected?"

"To confess the truth, he intimated as much, and even farther insinuated"——

"What?—Let me hear it all!" she exclaimed hastily.

"That he had broken off your mutual intimacy, lest it should have given rise to an affection by which his destination to the church would not permit him to profit."

"I am obliged to him for his consideration," replied Miss Vernon, every feature of her fine countenance taxed to express the most supreme degree of scorn and contempt. She paused a moment, and then said, with her usual composure, "There is but little I have heard from you which I did not expect to hear, and which I ought not to have expected; because, bating one circumstance, it is all very true. But as there are some poisons so active, that a few drops, it is said, will infect a whole fountain, so there is one falsehood in Rashleigh's communication, powerful enough to corrupt the whole well in which Truth herself is said to have dwelt. It is the leading and foul falsehood, that, knowing Rashleigh as

I have reason too well to know him, any circumstance on earth could make me think of sharing my lot with him. No," she continued, with a sort of inward shuddering that seemed to express involuntary horror; "any lot rather than that—the sot, the gambler, the bully, the jockey, the insensate fool, were a thousand times preferable to Rashleigh;—the convent—the jail—the grave, shall be welcome before them all."

There was a sad and melancholy cadence in her voice, corresponding with the strange and interesting romance of her situation. So young, so beautiful, so untaught, so much abandoned to herself, and deprived of all the support which her sex derives from the countenance and protection of female friends, and even of that degree of defence which arises from the forms with which the sex are approached in civilized life,—it is scarce metaphorical to say, that my heart bled for her. Yet there was an expression of dignity in her contempt of ceremony – of upright feeling in her disdain of falsehood—of firm resolution in the man-

ner in which she contemplated the dangers by which she was surrounded, which blended my pity with the warmest admiration. She seemed a princess deserted by her subjects, and deprived of her power, yet still scorning those formal regulations of society which are created for persons of an inferior rank; and, amid her difficulties, relying boldly and confidently on the justice of Heaven, and the unshaken constancy of her own mind.

I offered to express the mingled feelings of sympathy and admiration with which her unfortunate situation and her high spirit combined to impress me, but she imposed silence upon me at once.

"I told you in jest," she said, "that I disliked compliments—I now tell you in earnest, that I do not ask sympathy, and that I despise consolation. What I have borne I have borne—What I am to bear, I will sustain as I may; no word of commiseration can make a burthen feel one feather's weight lighter to the slave who must

carry it. There is only one human being who could have assisted me, and that is he who has rather chosen to add to my embarrassment——Rashleigh Osbaldistone.—Yes! the time once was that I might have learned to love that man—But, great God! the purpose for which he insinuated himself into the confidence of one already so forlorn—the undeviating and continued assiduity with which he pursued that purpose from year to year, without one single momentary pause of remorse or compassion—the purpose to which he would have converted into poison the food he administered to my mind—Gracious Providence! what should I have been in this world and the next, in body and soul, had I fallen under the arts of this accomplished villain!"

I was so much struck with the scene of perfidious treachery which these words disclosed, that I rose from my chair, hardly knowing what I did, laid my hand on the hilt of my sword, and was about to leave the apartment in search of him on whom I

might discharge my just indignation. Almost breathless, and with eyes and looks in which scorn and indignation had given way to the most lively alarm, Miss Vernon threw herself between me and the door of the apartment.

"Stay," she said,—"stay; however just your resentment, you do not know half the secrets of this fearful prison-house." She then glanced her eyes anxiously round the room, and sunk her voice almost to a whisper—"He bears a charmed life; you cannot assail him without endangering other lives, and wider destruction. Had it been otherwise, in some hour of justice he had hardly been safe even from this weak hand. I told you," she said, motioning me back to my seat, "that I needed no comforter—I now tell you, I need no avenger."

I resumed my seat, mechanically musing on what she said, and recollecting also what had escaped me in my first glow of resentment, that I had no title whatever to constitute myself Miss Vernon's champion. She

paused to let her own emotions and mine subside, and then addressed me with more composure.

"I have already said, that there is a mystery connected with Rashleigh, of a dangerous and fatal nature. Villain as he is, and as he knows he stands convicted in my eyes, I cannot—dare not, openly break with or defy him. You also, Mr Osbaldistone, must bear with him with patience, foil his artifices by opposing to them prudence, not violence, and, above all, you must avoid such scenes as that of last night, which cannot but give him perilous advantages over you. This caution I designed to give you, and it was the object with which I desired this interview; but I have extended my confidence farther than I designed."

I assured her it was not misplaced.

"I do not believe that it is," she replied. "You have that in your face and manners which authorizes trust. Let us continue to be friends. You need not fear," she said, laughing, while she blushed a little, yet

speaking with a free and unembarrassed voice—"that friendship with us should prove only a specious name, as the poet says, for another feeling. I belong, in habits of thinking and acting, rather to your sex, with which I have always been brought up, than to my own. Besides, the fatal veil was wrapt round me in my cradle; for you may easily believe I have never thought of the detestable condition under which I may remove it. The time," she added, "for expressing my final determination is not arrived, and I would fain have the freedom of wild heath and open air with the other commoners of nature, as long as I can be permitted to enjoy them. And now that the passage in Dante is made so clear, pray, go and see what is become of the badger-baiters—My head aches so much that I cannot join the party."

I left the library, but not to join the hunters. I felt that a solitary walk was necessary to compose my spirits, before I again trusted myself in Rashleigh's company.

whose depth of calculating villainy had been so strikingly exposed to me. In Dubourg's family, (as he was of the reformed persuasion), I had heard many a tale of Romish priests, who gratified, at the expense of friendship, hospitality, and the most sacred ties of social life, those passions, the blameless indulgence of which is denied by the rules of their order. But the deliberate system of undertaking the education of a deserted orphan of noble birth, and so intimately allied to his own family, with the perfidious purpose of ultimately seducing her, detailed as it was by the intended victim with all the glow of virtuous resentment, seemed more atrocious to me than the worst of the tales I had heard at Bourdeaux; and I felt it would be extremely difficult for me to meet Rashleigh, and yet to suppress the abhorrence with which he impressed me. Yet this was absolutely necessary, not only on account of the mysterious charge which Diana had given me, but because I had, in reality, no ostensible ground for quarrelling with him.

I therefore resolved, as far as possible, to meet Rashleigh's dissimulation with equal caution on my part during our residence in the same family; and when he should depart for London, I resolved to give Owen, at least, such a hint of his character as might keep him on his guard over my father's interests. Avarice or ambition, I thought, might have a great, or greater charms for a mind constituted like Rashleigh's, than unlawful pleasure; the energy of his character, and his power of assuming all seeming good qualities, were likely to procure him a high degree of confidence, and it was not to be hoped, that either good faith or gratitude would prevent him from abusing it. The task was somewhat difficult, especially in my circumstances, since the caution which I threw out might be imputed to jealousy of my rival, or rather my successor in my father's favour. Yet I thought it absolutely necessary to frame such a letter, leaving it to Owen, who, in his own line, was wary, prudent,

and circumspect, to make the necessary use of his knowledge of Rashleigh's true character. Such a letter, therefore, I indited, and dispatched to the post-house by the first opportunity.

At my meeting with Rashleigh, he, as well as I, appeared to have taken up distant ground, and to be disposed to avoid all pretext for collision. He was probably conscious that Miss Vernon's communication had been unfavourable to him, though he could not know that they extended to discovering his meditated villainy towards her. Our intercourse, therefore, was reserved on both sides, and turned on subjects of little interest. Indeed, his stay at Osbaldistone-Hall did not exceed a few days after this period, during which I only remarked two circumstances respecting him. The first was, the rapid and almost intuitive manner in which his powerful and active mind seized upon and arranged the elementary principles necessary in his new profession, which he now studied hard, and occasion-

ally made parade of his progress, as if to shew me how light it was for him to lift the burthen which I had flung down from very weariness and inability to carry it. The other remarkable circumstance was, that, notwithstanding the injuries with which Miss Vernon charged Rashleigh, they had several private interviews together of considerable length, although their bearing towards each other in public did not seem more cordial than usual.

When the day of Rashleigh's departure arrived, his father bade him farewell with indifference; his brothers, with the ill-concealed glee of school-boys, who see their taskmaster depart for a season, and feel a joy which they dare not express; and I myself with cold politeness. When he approached Miss Vernon, and would have saluted her, she drew back with a look of haughty disdain; but said, as she extended her hand to him, "Farewell, Rashleigh; God reward you for the good you have

done, and forgive you for the evil you have meditated."

"Amen, my fair cousin," he replied with an air of sanctity, which belonged, I thought, to the seminary of Saint Omers; "happy is he whose good intentions have borne fruit in deeds, and whose evil thoughts have perished in the blossom."

These were his parting words. "Accomplished hypocrite!" said Miss Vernon to me, as the door closed behind him—"how nearly can what we most despise and hate approach in outward manner to that which we most venerate!"

I had written to my father by Rashleigh, and also a few lines to Owen, besides the confidential letter which I have already mentioned, and which I thought it more proper and prudent to dispatch by another conveyance. In these epistles, it would have been natural for me to have pointed out to my father and my friend, that I was at present in a situation where I could im-

prove myself in no respect, unless in the mysteries of hunting and hawking; and where I was not unlikely to forget, in the company of rude grooms and horse-boys, any useful knowledge or elegant accomplishments which I had hitherto acquired. It would also have been natural that I should have expressed the disgust and tædium which I was likely to feel among beings, whose whole souls were centered in field-sports or more degrading pastimes—that I should have complained of the habitual intemperance of the family in which I was a guest, and the difficulty and almost resentment with which my uncle Sir Hildebrand received any apology for deserting the bottle. This last, indeed, was a topic on which my father, himself a man of severe temperance, was likely to be easily alarmed, and to have touched upon this spring would to a certainty have opened the doors of my prison-house, and would either have been the means of abridging my exile, or at least

would have procured me a change of residence during my rustication.

I say, my dear Tresham, that, considering how very unpleasant a prolonged residence at Osbaldistone Hall must have been to a young man at my age, and with my habits, it might have seemed very natural that I should have pointed out all these disadvantages to my father, in order to obtain his consent for leaving my uncle's mansion. Nothing, however, is more certain, than that I did not say a single word to this purpose in my letters to my father and Owen. If Osbaldistone-Hall had been Athens in all its pristine glory of learning, and inhabited by sages, heroes, and poets, I could not have expressed less inclination to leave it.

If thou hast any of the salt of youth left in thee, Tresham, thou wilt be at no loss to account for my silence on a topic seemingly so obvious. Miss Vernon's extreme beauty, of which she herself seemed so little

conscious,—her romantic and mysterious situation,—the evils to which she was exposed,—the courage with which she seemed to face them,—her manners, more frank than belonged to her sex, yet, as it seemed to me, exceeding in frankness only from the dauntless consciousness of her innocence,—above all, the obvious and flattering distinction which she made in my favour over all other persons, were at once calculated to interest my best feelings, to excite my curiosity, awaken my imagination, and gratify my vanity. I dared not indeed confess to myself the depth of the interest with which Miss Vernon inspired me, or the large share which she occupied in my thoughts. We read together, walked together, rode together, and sate together. The studies which she had broken off upon her quarrel with Rashleigh, she now resumed under the auspices of a tutor whose views were more sincere, though his capacity was far more limited.

In truth, I was by no means qualified to

assist her in the prosecution of several profound studies which she had commenced with Rashleigh, and which appeared to me more fitted for a churchman than for a beautiful female. Neither can I conceive with what view he should have engaged Diana in the gloomy maze of the casuistry which schoolmen called philosophy, or in the equally abstruse, though more certain sciences of mathematics and astronomy; unless it were to break down and confound in her mind the difference and distinction between the sexes, and to habituate her to trains of subtle reasoning, by which he might at his own time invest that which was wrong with the colour of that which is right. It was in the same spirit, though in the latter case the evil purpose was more obvious, that the lessons of Rashleigh had encouraged Miss Vernon in setting at nought and despising the forms and ceremonial limits which are drawn round females in modern society. It is true she was sequestered from all female company,

and could not learn the usual rules of decorum, either from example or precept. Yet such was her innate modesty, and accurate sense of what was right and wrong, that she would not of herself have adopted the bold uncompromising manner which struck me with so much surprise on our first acquaintance, had she not been led to conceive, that a contempt of ceremony indicated at once superiority of understanding, and the confidence of conscious innocence. Her wily instructor had, no doubt, his own views in levelling those outworks which reserve and caution erect around virtue. But for these, and for his other crimes, he has long since answered at a higher tribunal.

Besides the progress which Miss Vernon, whose powerful mind readily adopted every means of information offered to it, had made in more abstract science, I found her no contemptible linguist, and well acquainted both with ancient and modern literature

Were it not that strong talents will often go farthest when they seem to have least assistance, it would be almost incredible to tell the rapidity of Miss Vernon's progress in knowledge; and it was still more extraordinary, when her stock of mental acquisitions from books was compared with her total ignorance of actual life. It seemed as if she saw and knew every thing, except what passed in the world around her, and I believe it was this very ignorance and simplicity of thinking upon ordinary subjects, so strikingly contrasted with her fund of general knowledge and information, which rendered her conversation so irresistibly fascinating, and rivetted the attention to whatever she said or did; since it was absolutely impossible to anticipate whether her next word or action was to display the most acute perception, or the most profound simplicity. The degree of danger which necessarily attended a youth of my age and keen feelings from remaining in close and

constant intimacy with an object so amiable, and so peculiarly interesting, all who remember their own sentiments at my age may easily estimate.

EDINBURGH:
Printed by James Ballantyne & Co.